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FREE SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2014

Harrisburg:
PRIDE FESTIVAL pg. 26

Inside: EVENT PHOTOS

York:
EQUALITY FEST pg. 27

Analysis: Will Hobby Lobby Decision Affect LGBT Workplace Rights?

By Central Voice

"The court is fairly clear this is a limited ruling," Randall Wenger told *Central Voice* when asked if his client's ruling could be applied to LGBT civil rights in the workplace.

Wenger is a lawyer from the Independence Law Center, located in Harrisburg and affiliated with the Pennsylvania Family Institute.

Wenger assisted Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp. of East Earl in their successful appeal to the Supreme Court that requested the company's owners, the Hahns, a religious family of Mennonite Christians, not be required, based on religious beliefs, to provide employees coverage for birth control methods they believe amount to abortion. Conestoga Wood employees about 1,000 workers who make wood cabinets.

Randall Wenger

The coverage is called for in Obamacare. Of the 20 birth control methods noted in the suit, Conestoga Wood objects to four - two intrauterine devices and two types of formulations called the "morning after" pill. Their case was part of the Hobby Lobby case that made the same claim. There are about 100 similar cases working their way through the court system at all levels.

Regarding his client's objection, Wenger said the government defines life as beginning when a fertilized egg implants itself in a woman's womb. "My client believes life begins at conception." This is the religious view on which Conestoga argued their position before the nation's highest court.

The decision is the first time the high court has ruled that profit-seeking businesses can hold religious views under federal law. As part of its decision, the high court will allow the government to pay for the coverage denied by their decision so that women may still receive the forms of birth control to which Conestoga Wood objects.

LGBT Rights?

When asked if Conestoga, or other companies, could apply the decision to other religiously-based beliefs such as same-sex marriage, Wenger said, "I don't want to speak to that right now. My client isn't looking at other cases." He said that Conestoga's case amounted to a "religious liberty

Continued on page 34

Inheritance Challenger Successful

By Central Voice

Nancy Nixon is now part of LGBT history.

"It's all over. Now I'm officially a spouse," Nixon told Central Voice.

She will not have to pay a 15% inheritance tax after the death of her partner, Jeanne Schartz. They were together 31-years as a couple, both publically and privately. Since same-sex marriage was not outlawed until May 20, Nixon's relationship had no legal status under state law. Therefore, the 15% inheritance tax upon Schartz's death was applicable under the law.

Nancy Nixon

After a legal battle with the Pennsylvania Dept. of Revenue, she will pay no inheritance tax. She has succeeded in having the department acknowledge her relationship as one of common law.

With the US Supreme Court having declared bans on same-sex marriage unconstitutional, Nixon can now pursue receiving her spouse's Social Security, a step now under consideration by the Federal government.

Represented by Attorney Cindy Villanella in her legal challenge, Nixon said the department called Villanella indicating that if Nixon withdrew her appeal she would owe no tax.

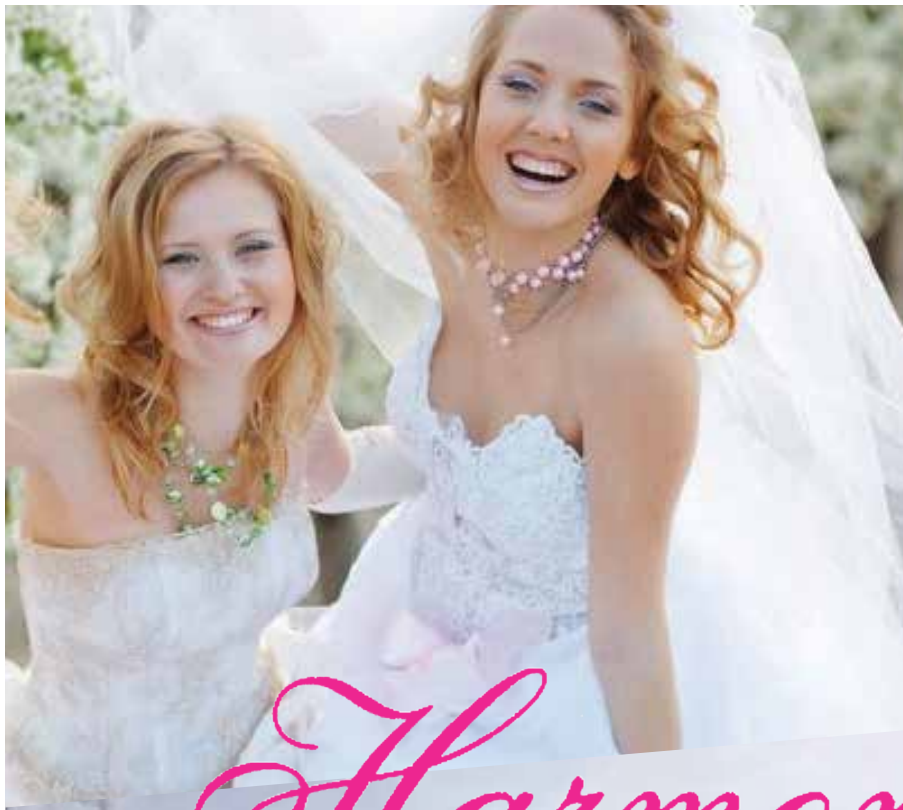
"They issued a "Record Adjustment" showing the estate is taxed at the spousal rate," Nixon explained. Although the decision is not a legal precedent, Villanella tells Central Voice the decision "could be used as an argument if someone is treated differently."

The department's decision came on the heels of US District Court Judge John Jones III declaring unconstitutional Pennsylvania's same-sex marriage ban. "We are a better people than what these laws represent," Jones wrote of same-sex marriage bans in his ruling, drawing comparisons between the civil rights movement and the modern gay marriage movement. "It is time to discard them into the ash heap of history."

PA Women's Health Agenda pg 13

New LGBT Documentaries pg 31

What's to See and Do? pg 29-31



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Political Update

• Lesbian Couple Denied Service

Although the municipal web site says: Small-town charm and down home hospitality for one business in Bloomsburg, PA. that does not include a lesbian couple in search of wedding dresses. W.W. Bridal Boutique owner Victoria Miller told The Press Enterprise of Bloomsburg that "providing those two girls dresses for a sanctified marriage would break God's law." The women tried to schedule an appointment but were turned down.

Aug. 11 Bloomsburg Town Council discussed the incident at a city council meeting that drew an overflow crowd of about 70 attendees that stretched into a hallway. Without setting a deadline for action, the governing body said they are considering a possible ordinance that would prohibit businesses from discriminating against customers based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Marriage is legal is Pennsylvania but the state does not have a statewide non-discrimination law. The boutique's refusal of service to the couple is legal. Thirty-three municipalities in the state have adopted a local non-discrimination ordinance inclusive of gender identity and sexual orientation. House and Senate Bills 300 would create a statewide law banning LGBT discrimination but no action is expected soon on the twin measures.

• Target Endorses Same-sex Marriage

Target Corp. is adding its name to a legal defense of gay marriage, joining other large companies that are taking a stand, just four years after the retailer came under criticism for supporting a strident opponent of same-sex unions, the Associated Press reports.

Target said it has signed a court brief backing marriage equality in a pending court case and publicly declared its support of gay marriage, a move similar to those taken by Starbucks, Intel and Apple. "It is our belief that everyone should be treated equally under the law, and that includes rights we believe individuals should have related to marriage," Target Executive Vice President of Human Resources Jodee Kozlak wrote on the company's blog.

• GOP Cleveland Selection Business Decision

The Republican National Committee promised that business considerations, not politics, would prevail in the choice of a city for its 2016 convention. Media reports indicate that several RNC members asked about a plank in the Texas Republican Party platform passed last month calling for "reparative therapy" — psychotherapy to help gay people become straight based on the view that homosexuality is a mental disorder. “It was a peripheral issue,” one source said, “but I’d be lying to say that it didn’t come up.” Some Republicans also fretted that Dallas could be at a disadvantage because former President George W. Bush lives in the city and has his presidential library here. The fear was that delegates and the media would focus on the past rather than the future and the GOP’s 2016 nominee.

• 17 Minnesota Lawmakers Demand Vikings Penalty for Anti-Gay Comments

Minnesota State Senator Scott Dibble put it very simply to Minnesota Vikings owner Zygi Wilf: The taxpayers of Minnesota are footing the bill for the Minnesota Vikings’ $500 million "brand new shiny stadium,” and if the Vikings want more tax breaks for the Super Bowl in Minneapolis in 2018, then Vikings special team coordinator Mike Priefer must experience a harsher penalty, perhaps even lose his job entirely, for having said, “We should round up all the gays, send them to an island, and then nuke it until it glows.”

Dibble, the gay legislator who spearheaded marriage equality in Minnesota, wrote a letter on July 25 signed by 16 other state lawmakers and copied to Gov. Mark Dayton, to the Vikings owner in the wake of the release last month of a 29-page summary report regarding former Vikings punter Chris Kluwe’s allegations of homophobic remarks by Priefer. The Vikings penalized Priefer with only a three-game suspension, which could be reduced to two games if he completes sensitivity training. Kluwe has said he now intends to sue the Vikings for the coach’s remarks and for allegedly firing him because he wouldn't suppress his public advocacy of marriage equality.

• PA House Cte. Hears about Equal Pay

The House Democratic Policy Committee last month heard from analysts, women’s rights advocates and education activists at a public hearing about equal pay in the workplace. The proceeding was requested by state Rep. Maria Donatucci, D-Delaware/Phila and focused on her House Bill 1250, which would raise fines against employers who pay women less than men for equal work.

Donatucci said, “The state’s mechanism for cracking down on gender-based wage discrimination is completely antiquated. The value of fines levied has not increased since 1959. At a time when women currently only make about 77 cents for every dollar men earn in Pennsylvania, this is unacceptable.”

House Democratic Policy Committee Chairman Mike Sturla, D-Lancaster, said, “It’s unfortunate that in 2014 we’re still having this conversation that gender inequity continues to exist in Pennsylvania. I applaud Representative Donatucci for proposing stronger penalties in state law so that businesses understand that we as a state find it simply unacceptable.”

• Turkey: Transsexual TV Reporter

Michelle Demishevich, a prominent LGBT rights activist, is Turkey's first transsexual TV reporter. While Turkey’s gay and transgender communities enjoy better rights than their counterparts in most Muslim countries, her achievement is rather unique. In Turkey, legislation does not discriminate against transsexuals, but the country has a long way to go when it comes to LGBT rights, advocates say. Homosexuality is not a crime in Turkey, but homophobia is widespread and activists hope to make the country an example of respect towards the LGBT community.

• Mexican Bishop: Homophobes Are Sick Ones

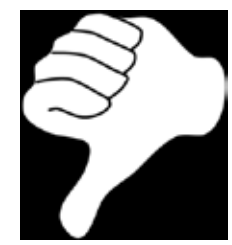
Raul Vera Lopez, Catholic bishop of Saltillo, has said that it is homophobia, not gay people that is a sickness in society. The newspaper El Pais asked Lopez his views on the issue after it was made public that he had baptized the daughter of a lesbian couple. When asked what his stance on the issue of homosexuality was, Lopez replied, "That is a topic that we have refused to address. The people who say homosexuals are sick are sick themselves. The Church needs to come to them not with condemnation, but with dialogue. We cannot cancel out a person’s richness just because of his or her sexual preference. That is sick, that is heartless, that is lacking common sense." Lopez said he agreed with the church’s teaching against abortion but complained about the hypocrisy of Catholics who only cared about homosexuality and abortion while ignoring other sins. "Abortion, just like same-sex marriage, has served as subterfuge to tell ourselves that we in the Church have our morals,’ Lopez said.

• Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act Struck Down

“We become legal again!” said LGBT activist Frank Mugisha. But Ugandan LGBT activists are bracing for a violent backlash to the decision of Uganda’s Constitutional Court to strike down the country’s Anti-Homosexuality Act, giving new hope to the country’s embattled LGBT people and human rights activists.

In the five months since Uganda adopted the law, which imposes a sentence of up to life in prison for homosexuality and criminalizes advocating LGBT rights, LGBT Ugandans have lived under the constant threat of arrest or mob violence. The court’s decision paves the way for organizations to again begin operating openly and to allow LGBT people to resume normal lives. But that change will come slowly — homosexuality remains a crime in Uganda under a provision of the penal code on the books before the Anti-Homosexuality Act was passed last December, and there is a chance of a surge in anti-LGBT violence in reaction to the ruling.

• Chattanooga Repeals Protections



Chattanooga, Tennessee residents have voted to repeal a city ordinance that extended essential non-discrimination protections to the city's LGBT employees, as well as partner benefits for those who have same-sex spouses. The vote was 13, 685 to 8,184. The result comes after a hard-fought campaign by a coalition of local, state and national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organizations to defend the measure. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) committed staff and financial support to the campaign to uphold the measure. That effort succeeded in building a broad and engaged pro-LGBT coalition in Tennessee, which will continue to push forward with efforts to expand equality across the state.

• American Quakers' "Underground Railroad”

A group of American Quakers say they are offering a way out for some desperate Ugandans fleeing the country’s new Anti-Homosexuality Act.

This group, based in Olympia, Wash., calls its project the Friends New Underground Railroad (FNUR) because it sees itself as following in the footsteps of the Quakers who helped bring slaves out of the American South before the Civil War. Working with fewer than 10 Ugandan “conductors,” they report having funded passage out of the country for 107 people with grants ranging from $52-$185. The refugees mostly travel in small groups on back roads, and make their way to safe

Continued on page 6

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR
Frank Pizzoli
PosOps@aol.com

CARTOONIST
Brad Gebhart

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Leo Dunn
Bill Krenz
Louie Marvin
Debra Miller
Jeanine Ruhsam
Trum Simmons

SALES MANAGER
Dave Brown 717-944-4628
davebrown@pressandjournal.com

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE
Steve Kozokas 717-856-3115
stevek@pressandjournal.com

NATIONAL ADVERTISING:
Rivendell Media
212-242-6863

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www.pandjinc.com
info@pressandjournal.com

MEMBER:

Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce

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voice box

LOVE IT

Great issue. Packed with information. Love it

Reader

ARTICLE

Thank you for the wonderful article and the great coverage.

Carla Christopher, York Equality Festival organzer

SERVICE

Your publication perform a great service to the community. Hope that you have many profitable years to come.

Gregory

COVERAGE

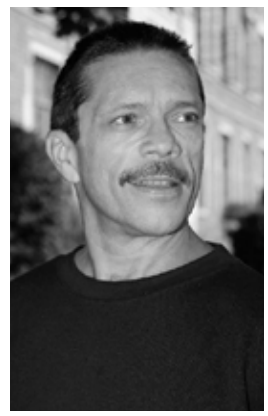
Again, thank you for all your coverage of my fight.

Nancy Nixon, successful inheritance tax challenger

E-mail your thoughts to Central VOICE posops@aol.com

publisher's voice

Kudos to York City on Equality Fest



Frank Pizzoli

Amazing what a dedicated group of volunteers can do when they focus on the task at hand.

An energetic group of people organized York City's first Equality Festival. They had 10 weeks to pull off the event. And pull off an event they did. Several hundred people - from the LGBT community and their supporters - gathered Aug. 2 in downtown York to celebrate diversity and to send a clear message: the LGBT Community is welcome in York.

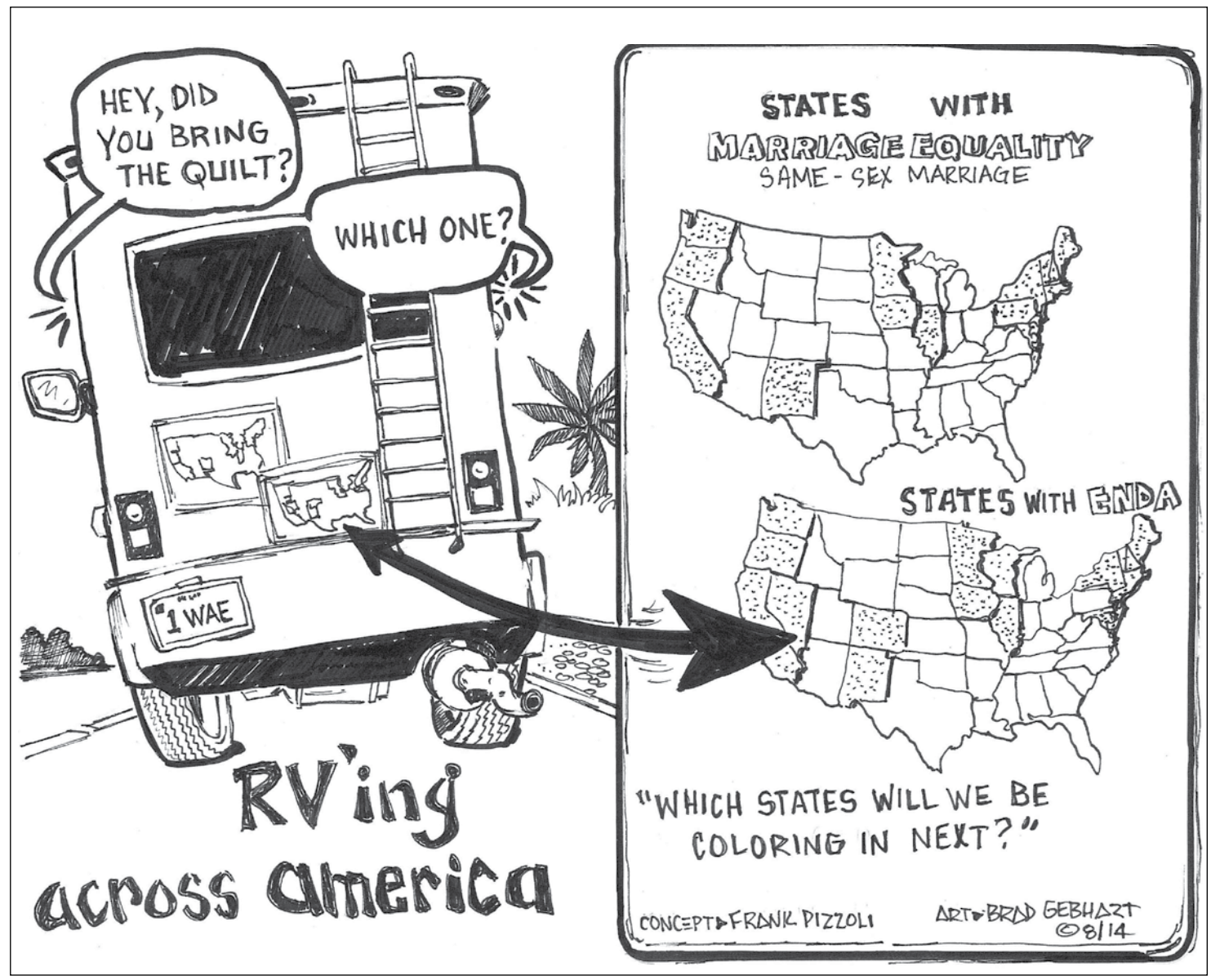
The event was organized by Carla Christopher and James Sawor, co-chairs, Daniel Hawkes, development coordinator, Vera Lynn DiPietro, outreach coordinator, Morgan Levine, resource coordinator, and Michael Updegraff, volunteer coordinator. Central Voice says *Thank You* for bringing together such a diverse group.

Mayor Kim Bracey lead an emotional and respectful wedding ceremony in which multiple partners declared their commitment to one another. Surrounded by family, friends, and the community-at-large, they said their vows out loud in the clear light of day.

Harrisburg's Mayor Eric Papenfuse, who has conducted same-sex marriages in the atrium of the city hall, sent a message that read at the event.

York area's state Rep. Kevin Schreiber and state Rep. Brian Sims addressed the enthusiastic crowd as they noted although marriage is legal in Pennsylvania, there is still no protection regarding employment or the use of public accommodations like hotels, restaurants, and the purchase goods and services. They asked the crowd to support twin bills in the General Assembly, House Bill 300 and Senate Bill 300 which calls for full protection. In other words, one of the couples married in the public ceremony could be fired simply for being gay. They could be refused services defined as public accommodations, like renting a hotel room or buying a meal.

The kingdom ain't come yet for LGBT folks in Pennsylvania or nationwide. Still, York's event brings the reality of full inclusion, full civil rights that much closer to reality.



In Defense of the President

By Alan Kennedy-Shaffer

Speaker John Boehner and the Republicans who control the House of Representatives want to impeach President Barack Obama. Or sue the President. Or authorize a lawsuit against the President. It's hard to tell.

Mr. Boehner says the resolution authorizing him to sue the President, which passed along party lines July 30, is not really about impeachment. It is about reigning in a President who has used his executive powers to accomplish what an obstructionist Congress chose not to do. Specifically, Mr. Boehner accuses the President of dragging his feet in forcing employers to pay penalties for not providing health insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

What's that, you say? You're confused about why Mr. Boehner would threaten President Obama for NOT enforcing a mandate that Mr. Boehner's House voted repeatedly to repeal? I guess it's the principle of the thing, not the law itself. But not always. As columnist Ruth Marcus of the Washington Post observed, "President George W. Bush unilaterally waived Medicare Part D penalties for low-income and disabled seniors late to enroll — with nary a peep from Boehner." Marcus noted that when it comes to standing on principle, the more consistent voice on Fox News is Sarah Palin, who correctly noted that if an offense is impeachable, a lawsuit looks weak.

Sarah Palin, the former GOP vice presidential candidate and – briefly – the governor of Alaska, publicly called for President Obama's head on a silver impeachment platter. She believes the President went too far not only by failing to make businesses pay for employee health insurance but also by bringing home a POW and refusing to immediately deport tens of thousands of immigrant children. For this, she wants the President impeached. Mr. Boehner, who remembers how well the last presidential impeachment went over with voters, wants Ms. Palin to tone down the rhetoric. Impeaching the President is a serious thing. Suing the President, apparently, is not.

Meanwhile, back in Rapid City, the South Dakota Republican Party forged ahead by voting to impeach the President. Echoing the complaints of Mr. Boehner and Ms. Palin that Mr. Obama had no right to bring home a POW, that he lied about Affordable Care Act mandates, and issued environmental regulations pursuant to his executive powers, the Mount Rushmore State rushed to charge the President with usurping the powers granted to him – and every President before him – by the Constitution of the United States. Instead of focusing on warrantless wiretapping or Guantanamo Bay or the numerous other areas where the President may have overstepped his bounds, the Republican Party has focused instead on executive decisions that irritate them.

Therein lies the rub. How is the President to get anything done with a House that won't vote for anything he supports and threatens impeachment for every action taken without their approval? What kind of lesson does that teach the next generation of Americans? The system of checks and balances that the President swore to uphold is not perfect, and requires improvement, but at least it permits a President with a do-nothing Congress to move forward in a limited way. That is what irks Mr. Boehner, Ms. Palin, and the South Dakota Republicans so much. They simply can't accept that a Democratic president has the same constitutional powers as a Republican one.

Fortunately, the President has been determined to keep fighting so long as he occupies the Oval Office. Keep in mind that his executive powers played a critical role in ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," extending LGBT non-discrimination protections to federal employees and contractors, and encouraging states to abide by the advancing Supreme Court recognition of marriage equality. Keep in mind that by refusing to work with President Obama on health insurance, equality, environmental protection, immigration, the minimum wage, civil rights, and other key issues, Mr. Boehner's House deserves the lion's share of the blame for our government falling short.

If anyone ought to be impeached, it is not the President. Mr. Boehner: please look in the mirror.

Alan Kennedy-Shaffer writes about politics for the Central Voice.

Environmental Groups Call for Investigation

Submitted by PennFuture

Environmental organizations in Pennsylvania have called for a full investigation into actions by the state Department of Health around natural gas drilling complaints.

The request is on the heels of the revelation that the health department circulated a list of "buzzwords" to the department's employees with the admonition that calls with drilling-related complaints not be returned. The list of flagged words includes "skin rash," "hair falling out," "drilling," "fracking," and "Marcellus Shale." This past weekend, the Associated Press reported that Governor Tom Corbett's former top health official said the state has failed to seriously study the potential health impacts of gas drilling activity.

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future said in a statement:

We are calling for a full independent and transparent investigation into the Pennsylvania Department of Health's response to drilling complaints. The legitimate questions of Pennsylvania citizens concerning their health or that of family members as a result of natural gas drilling activity cannot be discounted or dismissed outright. The fact that the department originally denied the existence of a "buzzwords" list, and the fact that Governor Corbett has refused to weigh in with a forceful response, leaves us no choice but to call for a full investigation. We are also asking the department to make available to the public all past and future health complaints, and to commit to addressing all future complaints in a timely manner.

This entire episode begs the question: Is the Corbett administration more concerned with protecting the natural gas industry than it is the health and welfare of Pennsylvania families and future generations? There should not be one set of rules for the gas industry and another set for everyone else. If there is any question that the actions of drillers are causing harm to our air, water and land as well as the health of our citizens, the governor and state agencies must address those concerns immediately. Governor Corbett needs to show leadership on this issue of great public concern, not delay and deny.

The above statement was affirmed by the following: Cindy Dunn, president/CEO; PennFuture, Adam Garber, field director, PennEnvironment; Steve Hzovdovich, Marcellus Shale coordinator, Clean Water Action-PA; Joanne Kilgour, director, Sierra Club PA Chapter; Joseph Otis Minott, Esq., executive director, Clean Air Council

July 22 in Penn Square, Lancaster, Planned Parenthood-Keystone was joined by dozens of advocates for women's health who voiced their objections to the recent Conestoga Wood & Hobby Lobby rulings. The group consisted of clergy, students, CEOs, retired people, families, working professionals, and farm market goers who rallied called for justice for women and their families.

Baseball to Recognize Glenn Burke as Gay Pioneer

By John Branch

Glenn Burke was 27 when he walked out on Major League Baseball, his promising career as an outfielder undone mostly by the burden of being a semi-closeted gay man. It was 1980, and it was more important, Burke later explained, to be himself than to be a professional baseball player.

"It's harder to be gay in sports than anywhere else, except maybe president," Burke said in 1982, when he came out publicly. More than three decades later, and nearly 20 years after Burke's death, Major League Baseball still has not had an active player publicly disclose that he is gay.

In the meantime, Major League Baseball is trying to ease the way for those surely to come. As part of a concerted effort to demonstrate an atmosphere of tolerance and inclusion, the league invited Burke's family to Tuesday's All-Star Game in Minneapolis — its first official recognition of Burke's early role in a movement just now gaining traction across the sports landscape.

houses in neighboring countries. FNUR says they know of at least 12 people who have gone on to third countries like South Africa and Sweden, and have received unconfirmed reports that around 30 have reached Europe.

The security precautions they say they take makes their work impossible to verify. The identities and locations of the conductors are kept secret even from one another. FNUR won't identify any of the people they've evacuated because they say they don't yet feel secure in their new location, though they say they financed the escape of 22 students in a Catholic seminary accused of homosexuality in the eastern town of Jinja whose case made headlines abroad.

• Report: Fewer than 3% Identify as LGB

The Department of Health & Human Services reports that fewer than 3% of the U.S. population publicly identifies as gay, lesbian or bisexual, according to the Centers for Disease Control. CDC found that 1.6 % of Americans identify as gay or lesbian and 0.7 % identify as bisexual. Those numbers mean 2.2 % of population identifies as LGB.

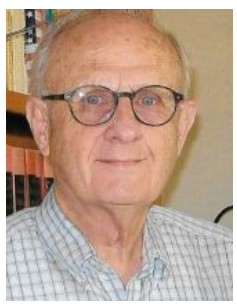
Meanwhile, 96.6 percent of the population identify as straight and the remaining 1.1 percent identify as "something else" or stated "I don't know the answer." No data was collected on identification based on gender identity or transgender status. The information was based on data from the 2013 National Health Interview Survey, which for the first time in its 57-year history last year included questions related to sexual orientation. According to the report, the addition of survey questions related to sexual orientation should help meet the Healthy People 2020 goals identified by HHS in addition to health objectives related for LGBT people. Advocates noted that the actual numbers may be higher since "self identifying" as LGBT is still difficult for some individuals in a government survey.

• U.S. Justice Dept: Eliminate or Reform

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has issued important new guidance to help end the use of state criminal laws to prosecute and penalize people living with HIV for conduct that would be legal if they did not get tested or know their status. DOJ's guidance, titled "Best Practices Guide to Reform HIV-Specific Criminal Laws to Align with Scientifically-Supported Factors," rebuts the unsupported assumptions that triggered the adoption of most state criminal laws targeting HIV; outlines the impact on individuals and public health of the stigma these HIV-specific laws reinforce; and explains the current scientific knowledge and medical developments that compel reform.

Nearly two-thirds of U.S. states have HIV-specific laws that impose criminal sanctions on people who do not disclose their HIV positive status to a sexual partner or who engage in behavior – such as spitting or biting – that poses virtually no risk of transmitting HIV. Regardless of whether HIV transmission occurs, those who are charged are prosecuted as serious felons, often receive lengthy sentences, and in nine states are burdened with mandatory sex offender registration. The classification of HIV exposure and transmission as a serious felony is grossly out of proportion to the actual threat of harm.

• Methodist Pastor Lights Himself on Fire



A retired Methodist pastor who went on a hunger strike in the 1990s to protest the church's discrimination against gays has committed suicide by self-immolation. The Rev. Charles Moore, 79, doused himself in gasoline and lit himself on fire in the parking lot of a strip mall in Grand Saline, his hometown in East Texas.

"I would much prefer to go on living and enjoy my beloved wife and grandchildren and others, but I have come to believe that only my self-immolation will get the attention of anybody and perhaps inspire some to higher service," Moore wrote in one of the notes he left behind, according to The Dallas Morning News.

Moore was a lifelong champion of social justice and civil rights. In a note left on his car, he lamented the legacy of racial injustice in Grand Saline, where he was ostracized by the Methodist church in the 1950s for supporting school desegregation. According to the United Methodist News Service, Moore wrote that he was giving his body to be burned for lynching victims. In other notes written prior to his death, Moore expressed frustration with the UMC's positions on homosexuality and the death penalty, as well as Southern Methodist University's decision to house the George W. Bush Presidential Center.

• Senators Call for Trade Agreement Review

Ten US senators have called on President Obama to examine whether recently enacted anti-homosexuality laws in sub-Saharan African countries should affect those countries' eligibility for duty-free imports under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Authorized in 2000, AGOA has offered tangible incentives for African countries to expand trade, stimulate economic growth, and integrate into the global economy. In order to be eligible for AGOA benefits, a country is forbidden from "engag[ing] in gross violations of internationally recognized human rights". However, countries like Uganda and Nigeria have enacted harsh and inhumane LGBT policies in the recent years, which violate internationally recognized human rights protecting LGBT people. These policies severely limit an LGBT person's access to health care, housing, and education, and also infringes on an LGBT person's freedom of expression.

The senators wrote: "We are deeply concerned over a growing trend of laws and proposed legislation targeting LGBT individuals in Africa, which violates the standards set forth in the African Growth and Opportunity Act. We therefore ask that your Administration review Nigeria and Uganda's eligibility for AGOA's trade preference and, if it is determined that those countries are not 'making continual progress' in meeting the statute's requirements, that you take steps to revoke AGOA eligibility to Nigeria and Uganda. We believe that the discriminatory anti-LGBT laws in those countries represent a clear violation of human rights and hope that the interagency process charged with AGOA's annual review will make this recommendation."

• US Ambassador Calls for Reform

The U.S. Ambassador to Australia John Berry told the 20th International AIDS Conference that the fight against HIV/AIDS cannot be won without the decriminalization of LGBT people. He emphasized that the world is at a crucial moment in the fight against HIV/AIDS, but criminalization laws impede greater access to preventive care and treatment by wrongly stigmatizing and marginalizing people living with HIV and AIDS. "Unfortunately, the criminalization of certain at risk populations and those who are HIV positive – and the stigma associated with HIV – are the very things that will prevent us from eliminating this disease entirely," he said.

• Garden State Equality Names Bowen

Garden State Equality, a New Jersey LGBT rights group, has appointed transgender activist and social worker Andrea "Andy" Bowen as executive director, according to BuzzFeed. Bowen will be one of the first out transgender individuals to serve as executive director of a statewide LGBT rights group in the US.

Bowen said she plans to ensure that existing LGBT rights policies and protections are correctly implemented and followed as well as filling in gaps in the state's policies, such as establishing transgender-inclusive healthcare across New Jersey.

• Maryland to Cover Transition-related Care

In a reversal of state healthcare policy, transgender state employees in Maryland can now access gender reassignment surgery, hormone therapy and other transition-related care under their state-provided health insurance plans.

The change quietly went into effect at the start of this month as the result of legal negotiations in a discrimination case brought against the state by Sailor Holobaugh, a 31-year-old clinical research assistant in neurology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore.

• Judge Thwarts Remaining Challenge To NJ

After New Jersey passed its ban on ex-gay therapy for minors last year, two lawsuits were filed challenging the law, one by therapists wishing to continue to practice the harmful treatment and one by a family seeking to continue the treatment for their son. In November, a federal judge ruled against the therapists, and on Thursday, the same judge dismissed the family's challenge, again upholding the ban.

The ruling somewhat comes out of the blue. The case had been stayed back in March while the U.S. Supreme Court considered whether to take up an appeal in a similar case in California. Last month, the Supreme Court announced it would not be hearing the case, allowing the Ninth Circuit's ruling upholding California's similar ban on ex-gay therapy to stand. With that settled, Judge Freda Wolfson now felt it appropriate to issue a decision in this second case.

• Trans Woman Settles Discrimination Case

A transgender woman has settled her housing discrimination lawsuit against an East Texas RV park, which was among the first cases of its kind brought by the U.S. Department of Justice.

However, Roxanne Joganik criticized the DOJ's handling of the case, saying the department's attorneys pressured her and her partner into accepting a combined settlement of $4,000, which she called "one of the lowest in American history." Joganik's 2012 complaint alleged that In Toone Services violated the federal Fair Housing Act by discriminating against her based on sex. The complaint was filed shortly after the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ruled that federal laws banning sex discrimination protect transgender people. "They said they weren't going to have my kind living in the park," Joganik told David Webb of The Rare Reporter at the time.

• Texas Lawmakers Link Marriage to Incest

Sixty-three Texas legislators have signed a court brief calling on the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to uphold the states' bans on same-sex marriage. Legislators who signed the friend-of-court brief are members of the Texas Conservative Coalition.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott appealed a federal district judge's decision in *DeLeon v. Perry*, which struck down the marriage bans as unconstitutional, to the 5th Circuit Court in New Orleans. One aegument in the legal pleading is that recognition of same-sex marriage "could lead to the recognition of bigamy, incest, pedophilia, and group marriage," the brief states. "As already discussed in this brief, restrictions on marriage relating to these moral considerations remain valid. Thus, the goal of actively trying to prevent those practices from becoming valid is entirely rational public policy.

Lambda Legal:

Halt HIV-Based Criminal Prosecutions

Lambda Legal has called for a moratorium on all HIV-based criminal prosecutions until state legislatures take action to implement the reforms recommended in the recent Department of Justice (DOJ) guidance advising states to eliminate such prosecutions absent clear evidence of an intent to harm and a significant risk of actual transmission.

"This is a watershed moment in the fight to decriminalize HIV. When the country's leading law enforcement agency—working hand-in-hand with the country's leading public health authority—reaches the conclusion that particular laws and criminal prosecutions are working at cross-purposes to our national strategy for ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is time for those with the power to end these prosecutions to take immediate action," said Scott Schoettes, HIV Project Director for Lambda Legal. "We call upon those charged with enforcing such laws—from governors to prosecutors to police detectives—to halt the criminal prosecution and resulting persecution of any individual based on HIV status."

Earlier this year, the DOJ co-authored an article with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) analyzing the current landscape with respect to HIV criminalization laws in the United States. As a follow-up, the DOJ this week published guidance ("Best Practices Guide to Reform HIV-Specific Criminal Laws to Align with Scientifically-Supported Factors" [link]) noting that these laws are not based on a current understanding of HIV or the availability of biomedical techniques for preventing its transmission, were enacted when the prognosis of those with access to care was much different than it is today, and place unique and unnecessary additional burdens on people living with HIV.

Within the criminal justice system, prosecutors have a significant degree of discretion and represent the most important safeguard against unjust applications of the criminal law. In this circumstance, any government attorney who is currently prosecuting a criminal case that turns upon the HIV status of the defendant is invested with the power to consider whether that prosecution conforms to the best practices set forth by the Department of Justice guidance and to discontinue prosecutions that are not in line it. In situations involving consensual sexual conduct between adults, a prosecution would not move forward under the parameters of this guidance unless there is clear evidence of both the intent to transmit the virus and a significant risk of transmission as a result of that person's conduct.

"Right now, dozens of individuals in states all across the country face prosecutions that are not justifiable under the parameters set forth in the DOJ guidance," said Schoettes. "No person who is in a position to halt such a prosecution should stand idly by while these individuals are subjected to such unwarranted persecution. We call upon those who have pledged themselves to pursue justice on behalf of the communities they serve to fulfill that pledge now, to end all prosecutions based on HIV status, and to return these individuals to their families and their lives."

Last month, in a pivotal appeal litigated by Lambda Legal, the Iowa Supreme Court set aside the conviction of Nick Rhoades, an HIV-positive Iowan who was initially sentenced to 25 years in prison, with required registration as a sex offender, after having a one-time sexual encounter with another man during which they used a condom. In reversing the conviction, the Court questioned whether HIV-positive individuals who have a reduced viral load as a result of effective treatment can transmit HIV through sexual activity.

Third Baltimore Trans Woman Murdered

Since April 2013, three transgender women have been murdered in Baltimore, in crimes that bear some similarities to one another. July 16, police officers discovered the body of a murdered transgender woman on the city's Northwest side.

Police have identified the victim as 26-year-old Mia Henderson, and said her murder bore similarities to that of another transgender woman, killed in Baltimore in early June, according to the Baltimore Sun. Police declined to directly connect the two murders, however, noting that both are still under investigation.

"We want to be strong partners with our LGBT community," Police Commissioner Anthony Batts told a gathering of LGBT advocates, according to the Sun. "Not by talk but by action."

Officers came across Henderson's body — located on the 3400 block of Piedmont Ave., near Lake Ashburton— while investigating another, unrelated crime in the area. According to reports, Henderson's body had experienced "severe trauma," marking Baltimore's second trans homicide victim in as many months, and the third since April 2013.

On June 3, police discovered the body of 40-year-old trans woman Kandy Hall on the city's Northeast side. Hall, whose body was also described as having experienced severe trauma, worked as a hairdresser, and was described as a "fun-loving, caring person."

In April 2013, 29-year-old trans woman Kelly Young was found shot and killed in East Baltimore. No arrests have been made in connection with the murders.

Lynn and Fredia Hurdle at Falling Waters

Sad Turn of Events for Couple Who Made Life Better for Others

By Central Voice

Sue Kerr, Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents, reports to Central Voice that Fredia Hurdle, wife of Lynn Hurdle, died suddenly Aug. 7. Fredia and Lynn Hurdle were among the plaintiffs in a case that went before a federal judge in Harrisburg. May 20 Judge John E. Jones III of the Federal District Court decided Pennsylvania's ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional.

Together for 24 years, the ruling meant the Hurdles, united in a commitment ceremony five years ago, could now have their union recognized by the state they considered home, reported the Post-Gazette. The couple thought they could get officially married in July, but Lynn Hurdle's daughter planned to marry in October, and Fredia Hurdle said they should wait until after her wedding. It was her year, her "moment in the sun," she told the woman she had long considered her wife. "It's legal. We have time," she said. But Thursday, Fredia Hurdle died from a stroke. She was 50 years old. "I was looking for the next 25 or 50 years together," Lynn Hurdle said. "It's been shell shock."

She spent many years as a bus driver for Greyhound Lines, eventually logging over 1 million miles. In 1990, she was driving a new route, and a passenger who helped her with directions turned out to be her co-pilot for life. "She was just larger than life," said Lynn Hurdle, who started buying bus tickets so the two could spend time together. "I just got captivated with her and her life and her personality."

As reported by the Post-Gazette:

Their July 2009 wedding ceremony was "maybe the coolest wedding I've ever gone to," said Witold Walczak, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania, who knew the couple through his wife.

A few years later, he asked the Hurdles to be plaintiffs in the suit the ACLU was filing to strike down the gay marriage ban in Pennsylvania, and they agreed.

Fredia Hurdle had been hospitalized for emergency gall bladder surgery, and the doctors and nurses had refused to give Lynn Hurdle information about her condition because they were not legally family. It was an episode that had caused them both great stress, and they recounted it in the suit. They considered their union a marriage; they wanted the state to recognize it, too. "She often said to me in fighting this that they were not the kind to seek out attention," Mr. Walczak said. "They just wanted to be known as the friendly couple across the street, who was always there with a helping hand and a smile."

Local LGBT Chamber Honored

The Central Pennsylvania Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CPGLCC) was honored July 31 with an award for excellence in community impact at the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)'s 2014 National Business & Leadership Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, according to a news release.

This is the third consecutive year that the local chamber has been honored with a National Chamber Excellence Award. Last year, the organization received the Chamber of the Year Award at NGLCC's 2013 National Business & Leadership Conference.

NGLCC recognized CPGLCC for its role in Highmark Insurance Company's decision to offer family health insurance policies for same-sex couples in Pennsylvania which are offered under their individual marketplace plans. The change took place this Spring.

After learning of one legally married same-sex couple's denial of a family health insurance policy by Highmark, CPGLCC reached out to Highmark, one of their Corporate Members, to ask them to change their policy. CPGLCC was able to encourage Highmark to expedite making a change in policy and because of their efforts; the process of extending family policies to same-sex couples in Pennsylvania was set in motion with the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance and the federal government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. "NGLCC affiliate chambers like CPGLCC are using their relationships with corporate members to expand their advocacy efforts and create more inclusive communities," said Sam McClure, NGLCC Vice President of Affiliate Relations and External Affairs.

LGBT Community Centers: A Vital Resource

Providing vital services to more than 1.9 million people annually, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community centers reported increased revenue for 2013, allowing them to develop innovative new programs to serve youth, homeless populations, and transgender populations, according to an extensive report.

The LGBT Community Center, headquartered in Harrisburg, offers programs throughout the region.

Authored by CenterLink and the Movement Advancement Project (MAP), the 2014 LGBT Community Center Survey Report: Assessing the Capacity and Programs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Centers, surveyed 111 LGBT community centers from 32 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Both large and small centers reported increased revenue, for combined revenue of $138.1 million, but the biggest concerns emerging from the survey data are the challenges facing small LGBT community centers. Smaller centers, often operating in locations and communities that are least accepting of LGBT people, struggle with a chronic lack of resources and paid staff; two in three small centers rely entirely on volunteers. These and other report findings are summarized below.

Clients, diversity

Participating LGBT centers serve over 37,900 individuals in a typical week and refer over 9,900 individuals to other agencies for services and assistance.

· LGBT community center clientele is diverse, and community centers often offer tailored programming: 90% of LGBT community centers offer specific programming for LGBT youth, 82% for transgender people, 61% for LGBT older adults, and 48% for LGBT people of color.

· LGBT community center patrons are disproportionately male, people of color, transgender, and/or low income.

Services, programs

In many regions, local LGBT centers are the only organizations serving the LGBT community, offering a variety of much-needed resources including:

· Physical and Mental Health Programs: Large centers spent approximately 19% of their 2013 budgets on physical health programs and 17% on mental health programs, including general health and wellness programs, medical and pharmacy services, STD/HIV prevention and treatment, counseling, and facilitated support groups.

Pat Van Horn, director of operations, left, and Louie Marven, executive director, the LGBT Community Center of Central Pennsylvania.

· Information, Education and Computer Programs: 20% of community center budgets goes to information and education programming, including referrals to LGBT businesses, speakers' bureaus, employment training/counseling, or in-house libraries. Many LGBT community centers (78%) also provide patrons with computer resources.

· Social and Recreational Programs: LGBT community centers offer a range opportunities for patrons, including parties and dances, social groups for targeted populations, summer camps for LGBT youth, and sports leagues.

· Arts and cultural programs: Centers often offer arts and cultural programming, such as gallery space and film screenings.

· Community Outreach and Civic Engagement: LGBT community centers target community outreach to the general public, to schools and healthcare providers, and to policymakers in their communities, among other populations.

Staff, revenue

· Revenue Growth. Both large and small LGBT centers reported revenues increases from 2012 to 2013; small centers experienced a 20% increase in revenues from 2012 to 2013, compared to a 12% increase for large centers.

· Revenue Sources. Fifty percent of 2013 revenues of large centers were from government grants, followed by 18% from individual donors and 8% from fundraising events. Foundation funding was only 12% of center revenue.

· Staff. Despite the increase in average center revenue, many centers still struggle with a lack of funding and resources; 21% of all surveyed centers have no staff and rely solely on volunteers; and 57% have five or fewer paid staff. Almost half of center staff (49%) identify as people of color.

Given the critical role of LGBT community centers in areas of the country with few other resources for LGBT people, small centers in particular are in critical need of additional financial support.

"The first few months we were open, people would show up and break into tears. They could not believe there was a new center in downtown Oceanside, a few hundred feet away from Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base," said Max Disposti, Executive Director of the North County LGBTQ Resource Center in California. "People would come in and share their stories, of when you could get beat up in the streets for being LGBT. Just five years ago, North San Diego County was not the place to be if you were LGBT. There is still so much work to do, but at least now we are more visible,

PA Lesbian Couple: Ending Benefits is 'Unbearable Crisis'

Eileen Halloran has knee replacement surgery scheduled for late August and will have to schedule a hysterectomy soon afterwards. She and her partner, an employee of Allegheny County, have carefully coordinated their respective health needs and recuperation periods. They've also begun to plan a 2016 wedding in light of the May ruling legalizing same sex marriage in Pennsylvania. (While supporting Eileen's public statements, her partner has asked not to be identified using her name.)

Eileen and her partner have been together for 10 years and have three adult children and two grandchildren. They currently live in Allegheny County in southwestern Pennsylvania, and their careful plans for their health and their relationship are now up in the air: recently Allegheny County announced plans to eliminate domestic partner benefits for employees effective July 31, 2014. Then, Allegheny County announced a new deadline of June 30, 2015 to marry in order to maintain their benefits. No new unmarried couples will be added to the county benefit plan.

Halloran likens this deadline to a county mandate to get married: "Part of my disgust is the fact that same-sex couples just celebrated throughout Pennsylvania that finally we can get married. Now, a month later, Allegheny County employees are being treated with no worth in regard to their unions. Do it the county way or else."

While acknowledging that the county isn't responsible for the type of wedding employees can plan, she does believe that they are showing disregard for the realities facing same-sex couples in the only marriage equality state without statewide non-discrimination protections.

"It's frightening to know that once my partner and I get married or even if we are not married, we can travel to Cranberry Township in Butler County to meet a friend for dinner and be discriminated against just for being us, two people who love one another. We can be refused service.

"I have friends who live in Butler County that live two lives, just to maintain employment. It's the year 2014; this all just blows my mind. When will it stop? I am fighting this battle not just for us, but for future generations. I want a safe world for my grandchildren and their friends to grow up and live and love in peace and fearlessness."

Eileen and her partner are supporting a petition on MoveOn.org asking Pennsylvania's municipal employers to maintain domestic partner benefits until statewide protections are in place. Her partner is a member of SEIU Social Services Local 668. President Kathy Jellison responded to news of the municipal benefits change:

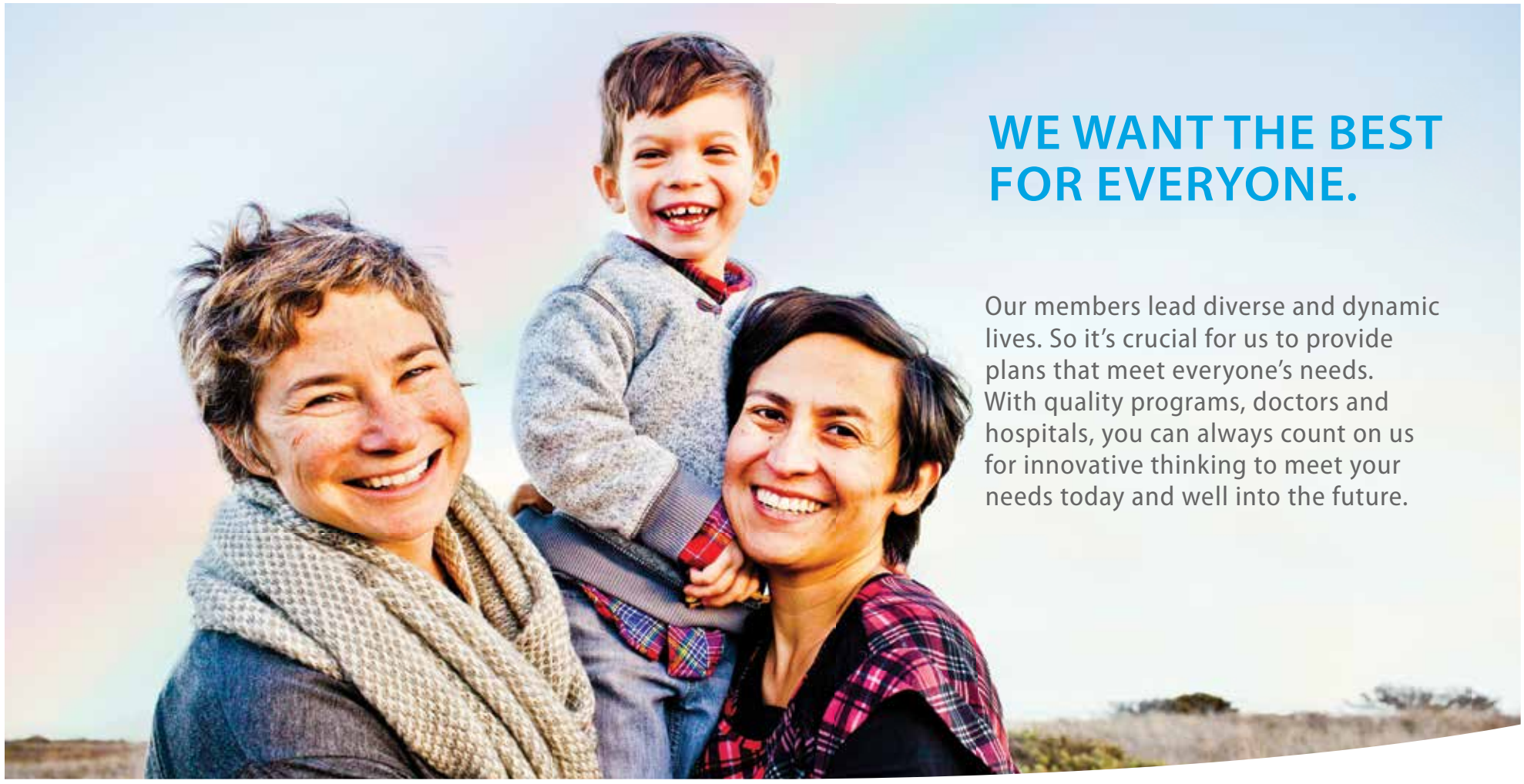
"Legally, it is my understanding that with the marriage equality law [sic] passing, domestic partners can now marry and thus, many employers are giving notice that they will end domestic partner benefits."

It is unclear how or if the SEIU will be responding to the planned changes. Halloran sums up what could happen if there is not more resistance to the decision:

"I feel very strongly that now that Allegheny County has set this mandate into action, the momentum will pick up. Now that the county is issuing this deadline to be married or lose your benefits, it will roll over to city of Pittsburgh employees. I believe once that happens most other employers that offer domestic partner benefits will do the same until it is a unified decision across the state."

City of Pittsburgh officials have been mum on plans to modify domestic partner benefits, which have been available to city employees since 1995. Philadelphia has offered the benefits since 1998. According to *Philly Gay News*, city leaders began meeting early in June to discuss the transition and noted that changes to policy would require action by the city council.

Allegheny County began offering domestic partner benefits in 2012, several years after passing a countywide non-discrimination ordinance in 2010.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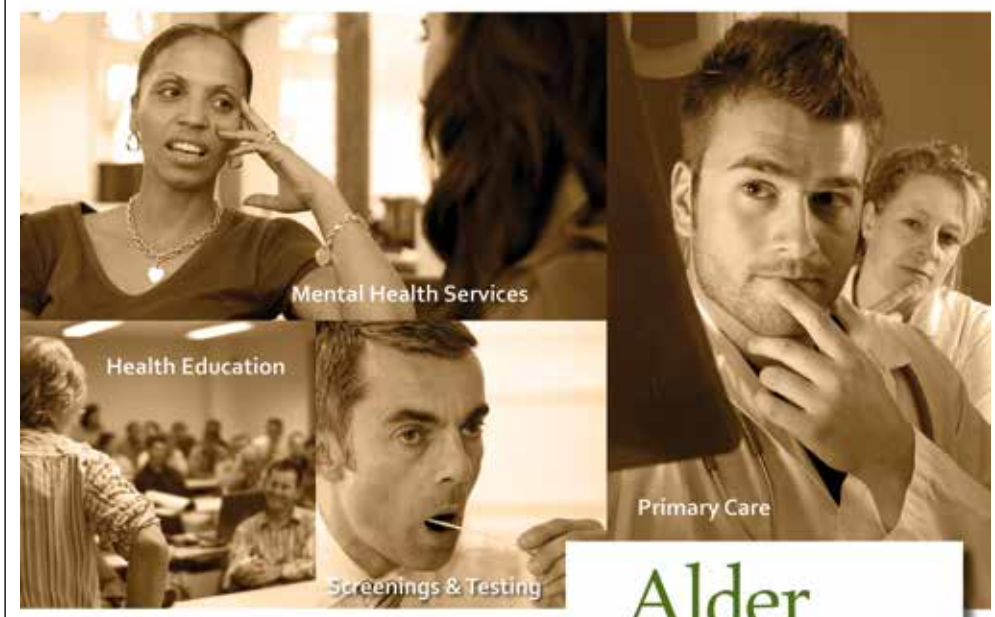

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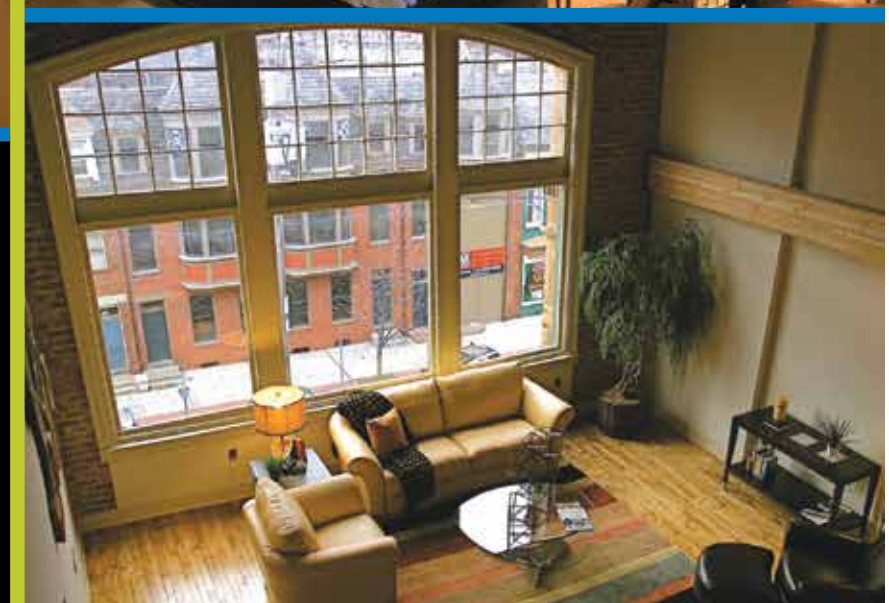

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PA Women's Health Agenda

by Mike Wood

The Pennsylvania's Women's Health Caucus has rolled out two phases of bills over the last year (first in December, then in June) intent on addressing women's health issues in the state.

Schwank

McIlhinney

Frankel

The bipartisan coalition of legislators, co-chaired by Rep. Dan Frankel (D-Allegheny), Sen. Judy Schwank (D-Berks) and Senator Chuck McIlhinney (R-Bucks), is intent on implementing a wide array of policies that protect and respect a woman's right to make medical decisions, and includes a bill to close the income inequality gap between men and women.

The caucus was formed in the spring 2013 in response to the increased number of bills that were restricting women's access to healthcare services in other states across the country, but also because of laws passed within Pennsylvania's state lines in recent years.

"I haven't counted how many times the words 'women's health' have been used in the legislature over the past few years, but I'm sure it's in the hundreds, if not thousands," says Rep. Dan Frankel (D-Allegheny), Co-Chair of the Women's Health Agenda.

"Ironically, very little of what's been under discussion have been bills that would have actually helped real women, right now," Frankel explains. "They've been bills targeting one very safe procedure—pregnancy termination—and controlling access to it. And that's a problem because I would argue we have a women's health crisis in the US."

Frankel argues that "Researchers looking at women's health have found that for the first time very poor women are living shorter lives than their mothers, shorter by about five years. It's almost unprecedented in the modern world, where life expectancy is supposed to keep increasing. We know that there are many reasons for it, but what health researchers call 'the social determinants of health' play a big role. Those are issues like poverty, stress, safety and access to health care—the same issues this package of bills is designed to address."

Back in December, Pennsylvania's Women's Health Agenda first addressed pay disparity between men and women, increasing access to breast cancer screenings and sanitary workplace conditions for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, among other initiatives.

The second phase of the agenda unveiled in June featured bills designed to combat poverty among women and their children, curb interference in patients' relationships with their doctors, identify and alleviate healthcare concerns for female veterans, and institute protections for women from workplace and online sexual harassment.

"Pennsylvanians want laws to improve women's lives and an end to a status quo of restrictions and roadblocks for women's health," explains Senator Judy Schwank (D-Berk), co-Chair of the Women's Health Caucus.

"When women are healthy and protected by Pennsylvania laws, families will be stronger and more stable," Schwank says. "The Women's Health Caucus is focusing legislative efforts on concerns most women worry about and struggle with, but have historically been put aside or downplayed because their experience has been, and largely remains, foreign to male policymakers. But these issues are not more important because they concern women. They affect all of us."

Melissa Weiler Gerber, President and CEO of AccessMatters, an organization which provides access to sexual and reproductive health are for more than 200,000 teens and adults in need each year points out the that entire package of legislation includes, what she calls, "common sense bills" that strengthen healthcare systems and services for women.

Weiler Gerber believes all 14 bills are critical to improving the lives of women and their families across Pennsylvania. In particular, she points to House Bill 900, which would expand eligibility for the state's HealthyWoman Program (HWP) which provides breast and cervical cancer screenings services to low-income, underinsured and uninsured women.

"As Pennsylvania's HealthyWoman Program provider in Southeastern Pennsylvania, we know how critical early detection is to surviving breast or cervical cancer, and we fully support increased eligibility for these programs," says Weiler Gerber. "[This] is a real priority for us."

Additionally, AccessMatters strongly supports House Bill 2303 and Senate Bill 1456, both of which protect the doctor-patient relationship from the interferences of politics and politically-based leanings. "It's important that consumers have access to the health information and services they need regardless of their physician's ideology," states Weiler Gerber.

Representative Frankel admits that some of these issues come up of every year—like increased funding for cancer screening—but others like the Equal Pay initiative, while perhaps previously introduced, have never been seen through the lens of healthcare. "It's important that we recognize how economic issues are clearly linked to health... and it becomes obvious when we think about how many single women are caring for children on their own, and how living hand-to-mouth increases stress and deteriorates health," says Frankel.

Newman

"Frankly it is just ridiculous that in 2014 Pennsylvania women are still paid 76 cents for every dollar a man earns and almost 100,000 Pennsylvania women live in poverty," says Sarah A. Newman, Director of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood Keystone and Central PA Project Director.

"Yet, in spite of these facts, the majority in the Pennsylvania legislature continues to focus on bills that attack abortion in the name of women's health and safety," Newman says. "It is time Pennsylvanian's demand a change to that conversation, and that the General Assembly support common sense measures, like allowing a pregnant woman a stool or bottle of water at work."

As Director of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood Keystone, Newman thrilled to to see that the women's agenda includes the Patient Trust legislation, which would seek to cease legislative intrusion into women's medical care. "It was just a few years ago that the General Assembly unsuccessfully tried to pass legislation that would have forced a woman to undergo invasive ultrasounds before she would have an abortion—ultrasounds prescribed by politicians, not doctors," explains Newman.

As a Central Pennsylvanian, Newman is also pleased to see the inclusion of Rep. Schreiber's work for female veterans and Senator Schwank's work to protect victims of intimate partner harassment, proving, she says that "there are champions for women in all of Pennsylvania, not just in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia."

"I hear from women around the state about inequities and issues that could improve women's health," says Representative Frankel. "I've taken emails from the Philadelphia area about maternal child health visits, and received simple, Thank You's from the women on my own street. The hardest stories probably come from the advocates with which we work—stories about women being forced to stand for an entire shift while pregnant, or provided unsanitary areas to pump breast milk to feed their babies. Women understand these burdens intuitively, and they'd like to see the laws changed."

"From the glass ceiling in the workplace to making sure their daughters are given an equal chance at any opportunity, the concerns are wide and deep," explains Senator Schwank.

"While women make up more than 51 percent of Pennsylvania residents, the 36 women representatives and eight women senators in the General Assembly today amount to less than 18 percent of House membership and 16 percent in the Senate—well below even the national average of just 23 percent," Schwank says.

Schwank explains, "Our goal and purpose as the Women's Health Caucus is to try to work past this 'legislation with inadequate representation' to address the challenge by organizing and acting together, without regard to political registration, religious affiliation or zip code or any other divisive characterizations."

Out of Town

By Andrew Collins

Asheville

Biltmore Estate

If you've been keeping up with the country's most buzzed-about hipster destinations of late, you've probably heard Asheville mentioned in the mix, perhaps alongside cities like Austin, Brooklyn, and Portland, Ore. This relatively small mountain metropolis in western North Carolina has long been a creative-spirited, relatively progressive island in one of the nation's more socially conservative regions. LGBT-owned businesses, top-notch art galleries and furniture studios, along with inviting Victorian and Arts and Crafts-style inns – and independently owned shops, music clubs, theaters and cafes – have thrived here for decades, but more recently, the Asheville has cultivated an urbane, artisan-driven food and drink scene that's particularly impressive for a city with just around 85,000 residents.

With a fairly reasonable cost of living and a moderate climate, Asheville (exploreasheville.com) is becoming a popular place to relocate among not just hipsters but all sorts of professionals of all ages, many from larger and more crowded cities. Additionally, young college grads are moving in at a steady pace – something that seldom happened in Asheville before the city began to undergo a renaissance a couple of decades ago. This leafy, hilly community just a 2-hour drive from Charlotte, a 3.5-hour drive from Atlanta and a 4.5-hour drive from Nashville has become a top weekend destination, too, with a sizable gay following.

Downtown Asheville rests like a saucer balanced precariously amid the slopes of forested hills and mountains. It's an impressively preserved city, with dozens of fine old buildings, many of them striking Art Deco beauties. The surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains account for much of the region's appeal – it's an hour's drive west to reach Great Smoky Mountains National Park. You can also navigate a stretch of the winding, scenic Blue Ridge Parkway, which passes right through the center of Asheville on its way north toward Virginia. Many other state parks and forests are within a short drive, and right in the city you can appreciate nature with a hike through the 10-acre Asheville Botanical Gardens or the 434-acre North Carolina Arboretum.

The downtown area is great for strolling – it's also quite hilly, though, so prepare to get some exercise. Be sure to stop by the Asheville Art Museum, which has a celebrated collection of contemporary American works, and if you're a fan of modern American literature, don't miss the Thomas Wolfe Memorial, which includes a visitor center and the boarding house in which the author of _You Can't Go Home Again_ grew up.

Almost every visitor to Asheville pays a visit to the Biltmore Estate (biltmore.com), one of America's few true castles. The 250-room mansion and resplendent grounds were commissioned by the phenomenally wealthy railroad tycoon George Vanderbilt and executed by Richard Morris Hunt in 1895. Touring the mansion's grandiose, if rather solemn, interior can feel a bit overwhelming, especially on a sunny day, but the 8,000-acre property's outdoor features are arguably its greatest draw - you could easily spend the day sauntering along the 2.5 miles of paths through the gorgeous manicured gardens, or along the many more rugged trails through dense woods and open meadows. Other highlights include the Biltmore Winery, the working dairy farm at Antler Hill Village, and the Outdoor Adventure Center, where you can book a wide range of activities, from river float trips to bike excursions. Right on the property, the luxurious, 213-room Inn on Biltmore Estate offers swank accommodations, and nearby Biltmore Village abounds with upscale shops and restaurants.

A little southwest of downtown and northeast of Biltmore Estate, you'll find one of Asheville's more recent developments, the rapidly evolving River Arts District (riverartsdistrict.com), which is home to both new buildings and converted industrial spaces now filled with art galleries and studios, as well as a handful of cool restaurants and nightspots. The neighborhood extends north along Lyman Street from across the river from French Broad River Park all the way to the I-240 bridge, with plenty of businesses on both sides of the railroad tracks, which bisect the neighborhood.

With its rapidly emerging culinary scene, Asheville has become a favorite foodie hub. Highlights are many, but here are a handful of notables. Chef-owned by a team who trained with famed Spanish elBulli chef Ferran Adrià, Cúrate (curatetapasbar.com) is one of the hottest spots in town, turning out authentic tapas with creative twists – consider the Catalan sausage bocadillo (baguette sandwich), or the tender skewered lamb marinated in Moroccan spices. The owners also operate the trendy and eclectic restaurant and cocktail lounge, Nightbell (thenightbell.com), just around the corner. Another top table is Rhubarb (rhubarbasheville.com), a sleekly swish bistro helmed by chef John Fleer and situated across from the Asheville Art Museum. Favorites from the contemporary Mediterranean menu include rabbit-leek rillettes, octopus a la plancha, and charmoula-grilled flat-iron steak. A snazzy spot specializing in locavore-minded cuisine, Table (tableasheville.com) has an intimate, insider vibe and serves tempting victuals like duck confit with carrots, fennel kraut and medjool dates in its handsome street-level dining room. Head upstairs to the bar, Imperial Life (imperialbarasheville.com), for lighter late-night snacking and old-school cocktails.

Set inside one of Asheville's landmark 1920s buildings, the Grove Arcade, you'll find a wonderful wine bar and tap room, Sante (santewinebar.com). On the other side of the arcade, Carmel's Restaurant and Bar (carmelsofasheville.com) specializes in contemporary seafood and American fare and has a handsome little dining room plus plenty of seating outside along the sidewalk. Next door, you can browse thousands of new and used tomes and sip bubbly at the whimsical Battery Park Book Exchange & Champagne Bar (batteryparkbookexchange.com)

Other good bets around downtown include Limones (limonesrestaurant.com) for mod California-Mexican fare (the weekend brunch is particularly popular); Chai Pani (chaipaniasheville.com), a purveyor of cheap and delicious Indian street food, such as kale pakoras, spicy lamb hash, and bhel puri, a traditional puffed-rice snack; and Wicked Weed (wickedweedbrewing.com), a rambling brewpub on two levels producing outstanding craft beer and great bar food too.

In the hip River Arts District, stop by Wedge Brewing Company (wedgebrewing.com) not just to sample fine brews but also to nosh from the several excellent food carts – the rotation changes daily (El Kimchi, which appears Mondays and Saturdays, is a highlight, serving Korean-Mexican fusion fare). There's also live music and, during the warmer months, an outdoor cinema. A bit south along bustling Depot Street, the Junction (thejunctionasheville.com) serves delectable Southern comfort fare (pan-seared peaches, sweet-tea-brined fried chicken), while airy and contemporary Blue Kudzu (bluekudzusake.com) is one of the nation's premier sake breweries and also a source of outstanding Pan-Asian fare, such as crisped-pork-belly ramen and kimchi Rueben sandwiches.

A neighborhood very much on the rise and becoming increasingly popular with the LGBT set, West Asheville is a short hop from downtown and is home to a handful of inviting, laid-back eateries, including Biscuit Head (biscuitheads.com), where you can tuck into a plate of fluffy biscuits prepared in a variety of ways (sweet potato-coconut gravy, with fried green tomatoes and poached eggs); and Oyster House Brewing (oysterhousebeers.com), a fun little neighborhood spot that specializes in Southern pub fare.

Good spots for casual snacking include City Bakery Café (citybakery.net), an airy space with a few tables on the sidewalk and superb sandwiches; Dobrá Tea (dobrateanc.com), a Czech-inspired tearoom with tasty Middle Eastern food; and funky Izzy's Coffee Den (izzyscoffeeden.com), which fits the bill for high-octane java, craft beer and simply hanging out and people-watching. French Broad Chocolate Lounge (frenchbroadchocolates.com) handcrafts exquisite truffles, caramels and bars of chocolate – you

continued on page 24

I do. I do. They did!

Carla Christopher & Tameca Waid

How did you meet?
T.L. and I are both poets. I am York City's former Poet Laureate and I also own an independent publishing company. T.L. is a Harrisburg-based poet who runs a publishing company up there. We both read poetry at the LGBT Center of Central PA and discovered our mutual interests.

Where did you get married?
We chose to be married at Equality Fest, Aug. 2. We could think of no better place to show how proud we were of our commitment to each other and how happy that we are to be able to marry in our home state with our friends and family

How did you decide who to invite to your wedding ceremony?
We invited our local family and friends, all the people who have become like family in the planning of Equality Fest and the local arts community who have been our family for years. What makes a better party then being surrounded by people you love and who will have fun with the whole thing?

Did you have a reception afterward?
Aug. 1, we had a ceremony for close friends and family at Lux Night Lounge, York. Since the party was burlesque themed, so was our ceremony. The bridesmaids had fun with that one! We invited over 100 people and had to make ourselves stop. We had no idea how many people we knew between the two of us. When over 80 of our closest friends sent messages that they were coming we were shocked, touched and then freaked out. How are we going to feed all these hungry people!

Would you have gotten married in Pennsylvania had it been legal at the time of your wedding?
We contemplated a destination wedding but marriage is this unique blend of government recognition, the affirmation of your friends and family and their acknowledgment of support AND the private commitment between the couple. All three are integral parts of what marriage has come to mean over time in contemporary American society. Being married in the place we call home, with the people we call family, well, there was quite simply no other option the moment being married in Pennsylvania was a possibility.T.L. said that politically marriage is now an option and a right. We should exercise it. At the end of the day though, the only thing that matters to her is that she is in love and that she wanted us to be together.

Carla Christopher is a recent Poet Laureate of the City of York. She co-organized York City's first Equality Festival, Aug. 3 at which she and Tameca Waid (TL) were married, along with other couples, by Mayor Kim Bracey. At one time, Waid operated anLGBT bookstore on Steelton's Front Street.

Adam Hagerty & Brad Martin

Where did you get married?
We got married in Boston, Mass. on Sept. 26, 2013.

How did you decide who to invite to your wedding ceremony?
It was just Adam and me and a clerk from The City of Boston's Clerk of Court office.

Did you have a reception afterward?
We are planning on having a reception next year for friends and family, but with always being busy with planning Pride we really haven't had much time to even think about and start planning a reception. We both really want to have a reception soon.

Would you have gotten married in Pennsylvania had it been legal at the time of your wedding?
Yes, but I never would have thought it would be legal this quick.

Adam Hagerty is vice president of operations and Brad Martin is president of Pride Festival of Central PA.

Planning a Stress Free Honeymoon

by David E. Kern Jr.

After the stress and craziness of planning the perfect wedding, who wants to add more stress by trying to plan the honeymoon?

Planning an amazing honeymoon doesn't have to be stressful. Many times couples end up booking overpriced packages through online sites that cannot possibly deliver service that is customized to meet their individual passions, interests, and needs. As a local travel agent I am going to show you how you can create a one of a kind adventure in just four easy steps that will save you money.

Step 1: Dream it

Imagine if you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go? What kind of honeymoon are you looking for? Is climbing on top of the Colorado mountains your idea of a perfect vacation moment? Is your ideal getaway walking hand-in-hand on a Caribbean beach while your cares wash away with the crystal blue waves? This is your chance to come up with your once in a lifetime experience.

Step 2: Look to the future

The two major questions that come up are: "When should we go," and "How are we going to pay for this?"

To get a great honeymoon that fits your budget, look to at least 6 - 8 months ahead. Booking ahead allows you to make low monthly payments, sometimes as low as $50 - $100 per month. Another option is to look to the "off seasons" for certain destinations when prices are much lower and have less travelers. This will help to create a more private honeymoon experience.

Another option to help you pay for your honeymoon is to let your friends and family help give you a special honeymoon with a honeymoon registry. This is one of the biggest trends in weddings currently, where guest can contribute to your trip, purchase romantic dinners for two, upgrade you to the honeymoon suite, buy airfare, give you couples massages and much more. Your guests can easily go online and purchase these items through your own free personal website provided by the registry. There are several great and easy to use honeymoon registry services available online.

Step 3: Make a call

After you come up with your idea for your dream honeymoon, contact your local travel agent to help you. Travel agents work for you for FREE! Agents are paid through the companies that they use to book your vacation, not by you. So you are getting a planner at no cost to you.

Agents can get better discounts than what you can find via online vacations sites. They can also help you set up a payment plan for the majority of your travel expenses. Airfare is one exception since it needs to be paid in full at the time of booking. One-on-one meetings with your agent give you that special attention to details: likes, dislikes, passions and ideas for the perfect honeymoon.

Your agent will let you know exactly what documents you will need for your honeymoon such as passports, IDs, medical cards, etc. Begin to have these documents updated as soon as possible, because for example, passports can take several weeks to update and receive them.

Step 4: Start your honeymoon before you go!

Once you have worked with your local travel agent, sit back, relax and get excited! Watch your honeymoon grow into a once in a lifetime adventure. Agents are here to work for you to create a special moment in your life. They will do everything to find the best deals, create personal itineraries and have special little surprises for you to make your honeymoon memories last a life time.

Following these steps will give you a dream honeymoon that is not beyond your budget. Using a local travel agent can take away the stress of planning and just leave you with magical memories. Honeymoons are supposed to be as memorable as the wedding that you are celebrating. Remember to support local area LGBT travel agents, because they are here for you and have a passion for creating special travel experiences.

David E. Kern, Jr, of David Kern Vacations, is the owner and an independent travel consultant for Live for the Adventure, 717-514-9901, dkvacations.com

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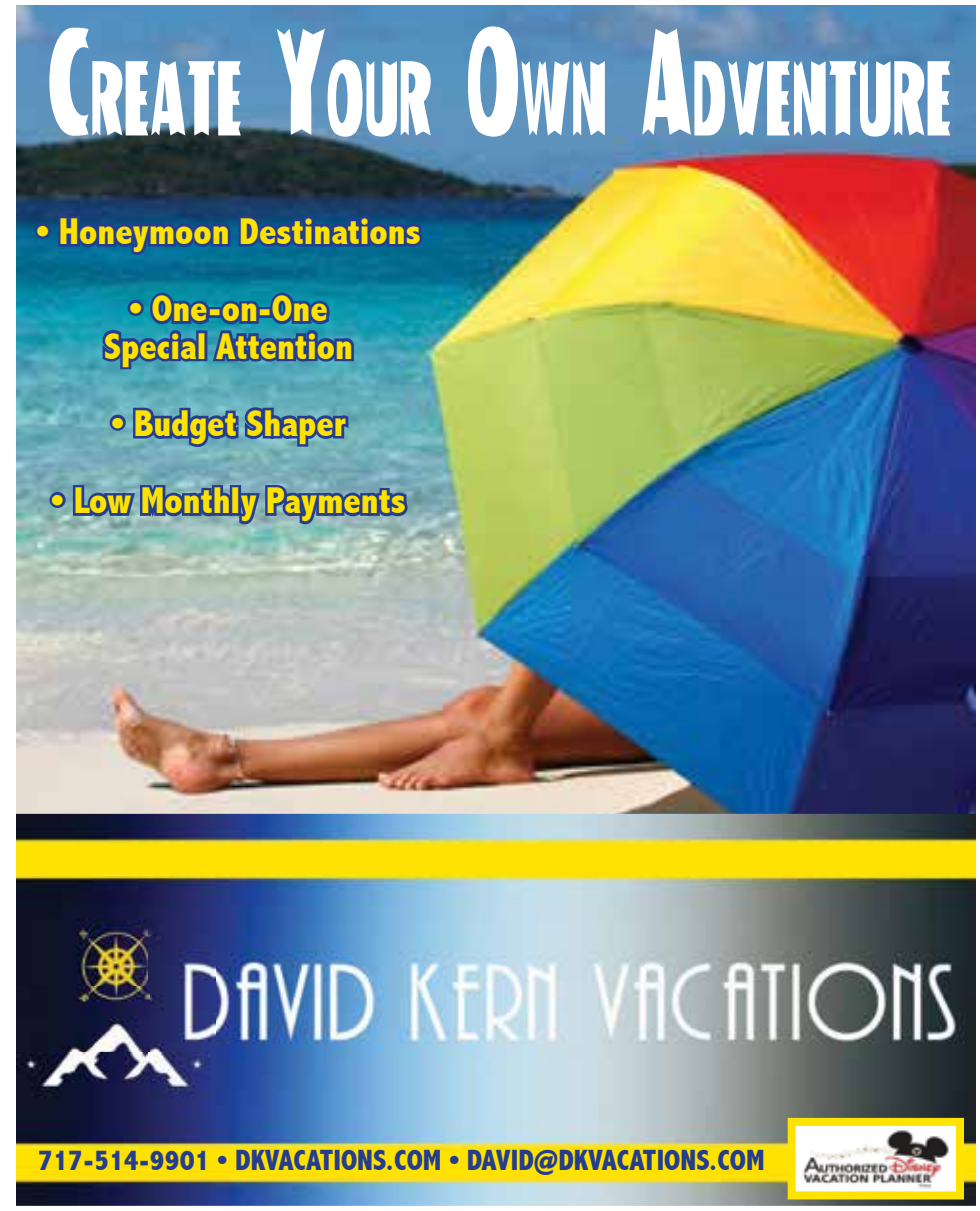

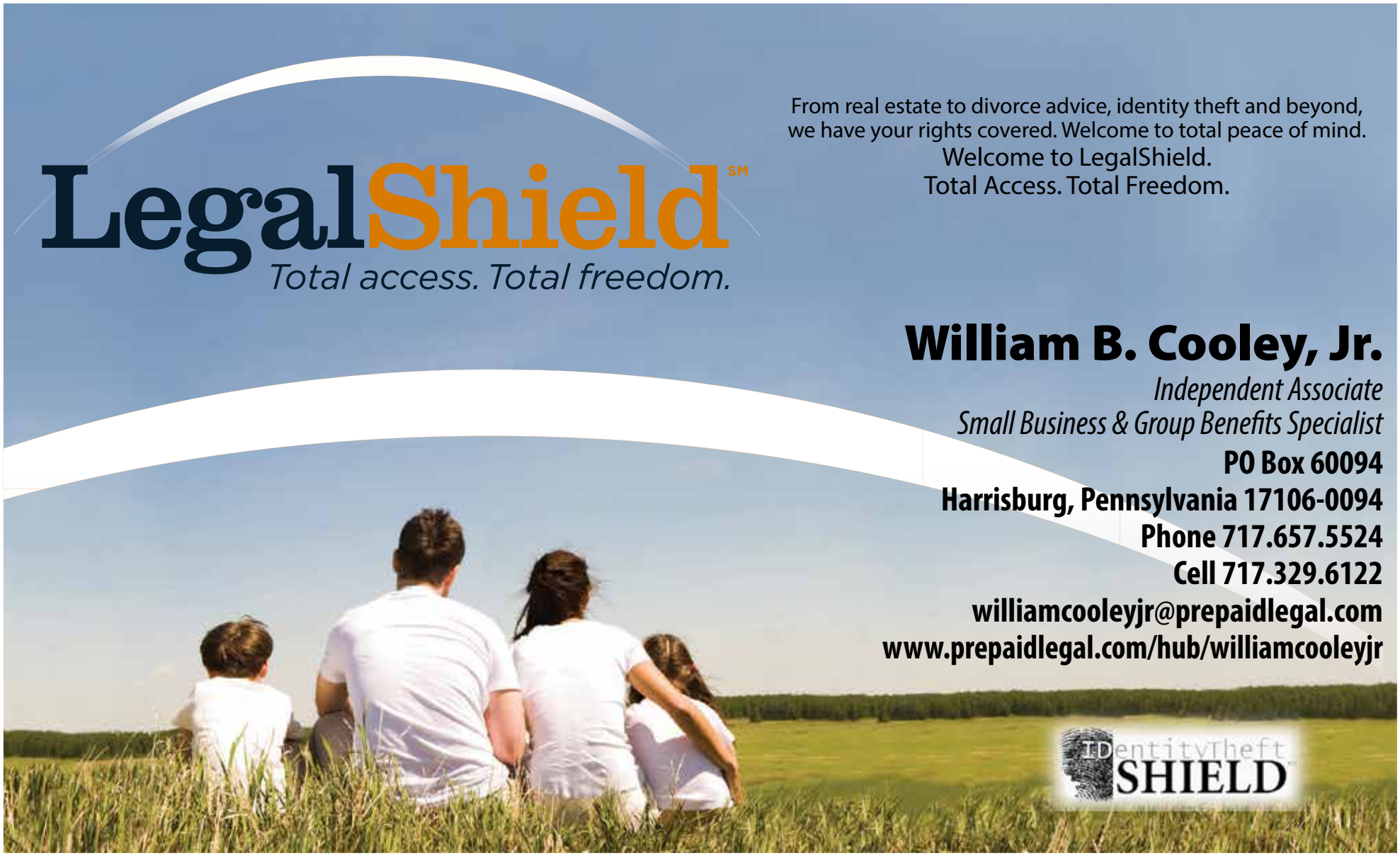

Will You?

You got engaged a few months ago, and the wedding planning is underway. You've set the date, booked the venue and now you're ready to select the wedding party. You may know without a doubt whom you want to be your maid of honor or best man. The rest of your wedding party, well, the choices are not nearly so clear.

Before you do anything, make certain the people you have in mind are on board. No one is a given until they have been asked and have said yes. You may have only one sister destined to be in your wedding but you must ask her first. For all you know, she could already be committed to another wedding on the day of your wedding.

Once your maid of honor and best man have said yes, you can focus on the rest of your wedding party. Draw up a list of the positions you would like to fill and the people you would like to see in them. Be realistic in your assessment. Don't expect your young, super-shy cousin Megan to be a good candidate. That role might better be served by Megan's older, more outgoing brother Mike. Determine the best people for the jobs and have a backup list just in case. Just because Mike wants to be in your wedding doesn't mean he will be able to. He could very well have a business trip planned on the day of your wedding.

When you have a list of potential candidates, it's time to ask them. That's right. You need to ask. Don't assume your nephew will be your ringbearer. He might not want to or have an important soccer game that day. You can make a request in any number of ways. You can send out a formal invitation, you can call or stop by, or you can invite everyone over to your home for a little get-together. Fire up the grill, make a spread, announce your wedding date and ask those in attendance to be in your wedding. With small kids, you might want to speak to their parents beforehand.

Be prepared for some declines. Some may say yes, some may hesitate and tell you later, and some may just flat out tell you no. Don't take it personally. They may have something else to do or just not be interested. Tell them thanks anyway and take a look at your backup list.

Selecting the right people to be in your wedding takes time. Don't rush it. Consider all of the options carefully and be prepared for some people to say no.

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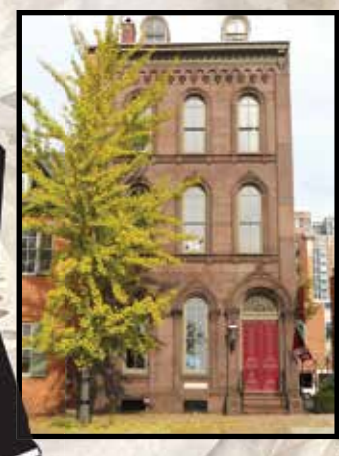

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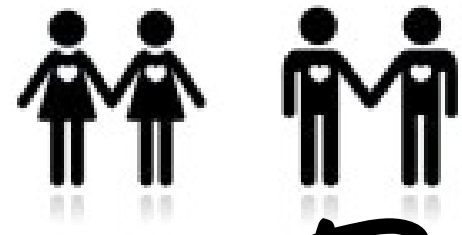
Micah 6:8

"...and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."



Marriage Round-up

PENNSYLVANIA - A U.S. Supreme Court justice has rejected a Pennsylvania county clerk's bid to stop gay marriages in the state while she tries to get standing in a legal case to stop them permanently. Without comment, Justice Samuel Alito rejected an appeal by Schuylkill County Orphans' Court Clerk Theresa Santai-Gaffney. The clerk can appeal to another justice and early reports are that another challenge is in the works.

Same-sex marriage became legal in Pennsylvania on May 20 when U.S. District Judge John E. Jones III struck down a state ban against the practice. Gov. Tom Corbett's administration decided not to appeal the decision. The county clerk, however, then tried to intervene. The federal judge and a federal appellate court rebuffed her attempts, prompting her appeal to the Supreme Court.

OHIO - In a first-of-its kind amicus brief, Ohio's former attorney general, police chiefs, and their affiliated organizations have urged the U.S. Court of Appeals in the 6th Circuit to end laws that deny same-sex couples the freedom to marry in four states including Ohio. The 6th Circuit, which has pending cases from all four of the states within its jurisdiction – Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee and Kentucky – heard arguments in those cases in August. Known as the First Responders Brief, the plea argued: "Marriage is a civil right in this country and carries with it benefits that should be available to all law enforcement personnel, perhaps especially so since they are the defenders of the rights of others. Law enforcement officers in committed, same-sex relationships should be afforded the same dignity, respect and rights through marriage that other personnel are granted. Handling those relationships with fairness and impartiality demonstrates that we value these officers and all they contribute to making our communities safe."

UTAH - The Utah attorney general has filed an appeal to a court decision in favor of marriage equality in the state to the U.S. Supreme Court. The announcement came on the deadline day when Attorney General Sean Reyes needed to decide whether to appeal the decision by a three-judge panel of the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals against the marriage ban to the full court. Now that Utah has opted out of this intermediate step, the only option for appeal is the high court. This is the first time a case about marriage for same-sex couples has been appealed to the Supreme Court since last year's landmark ruling.

COLORADO - Colorado District Court Judge C. Scott Crabtree issued a ruling striking down Colorado's unconstitutional marriage ban, with a stay pending appeal.

INDIANA, WISCONSIN - Indiana and Wisconsin officials August 13 made the case for the constitutionality of their states' bans on same-sex couples' marriages. The scheduled arguments came a week after the scheduled arguments in the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, where bans in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee are being challenged. Also, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that a state registry for same-sex couples does not violate the state's constitutional ban on marriage equality. The registry ensures same-sex couples have the right to hospital visits, family medical leave, health benefits under a partner's insurance, and the right to inherit a partner's assets.

HAWAII, IDAHO, NEVADA - The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals is slated to hear appeals of challenges from Hawaii, Idaho, and Nevada in September. The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals also has a challenge to Texas's marriage ban pending, but no arguments are scheduled.

MISSISSIPPI, FLORIDA - Mayor of Waveland, Mississippi, David Garcia, has become the first mayor in the state to publicly support marriage rights for same-sex couples. Mississippi's Yazoo City Mayor Diane Delaware told the Washington Blade she has "no problem" with same-sex marriage, although she did not overtly state her support.

WASHINGTON - By a unanimous vote on July 9, the Puyallup Tribal Council passed an amendment to the tribal domestic relations code to add a section legalizing same-sex marriages. This not only puts the Tribe in line with Washington State's same-sex marriage law but also places the Puyallups among the leadership nationwide of Indian tribes that have passed similar resolutions in response to the movement for same-sex marriage that is slowly but surely sweeping across the country. "People who are gay or lesbian could not marry the person they love on this reservation and now they can," said Council Member Maggie Edwards who authored the amendment with tribal attorney Toni Whitegrass.

OKLAHOMA - July 18 the second consecutive appellate ruling in favor of marriage came from the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver. The court ruled in favor of same-sex couples' freedom to marry, upholding a marriage ruling out of Oklahoma back in January.

CONNECTICUT - Connecticut's highest court has ruled that some legal rights of same-sex predate the state's 2008 adoption of marriage equality and earlier approval of civil unions. The decision, which is the first of its kind, overturned lower court rulings and allowed a widow to sue a doctor for medical malpractice for the death of her wife. The alleged malpractice occurred before the state adopted marriage equality.

VIRGINIA - Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review a federal appellate court ruling declaring the state's same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional. Herring, a Democrat who has said the Virginia ban is unconstitutional, filed a petition asking the nation's highest court to hear Virginia's marriage equality case and definitively settle the constitutional issues it raises by the nation's highest court.

TEXAS - Texas AG Greg Abbott is appealing the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling striking down state's same-sex marriage bans. He's hoping to buck a trend of 29 consecutive state and federal rulings in favor of same-sex marriage. In its 42-page brief, Abbott argues the issue should be settled by voters and state legislatures, not the courts. Abbott's office also argues that there is a rational basis for Texas' marriage bans because they promote procreation and stable family relationships.

NORTH CAROLINA - Ray Cooper, North Carolina's Attorney General will stop defending his state's gay marriage ban. A federal appeals court ruling striking down Virginia's ban on same-sex marriage apparently reverberated across the state's border. Cooper cited the precedent the Virginia ruling had set. "Our attorneys have vigorously argued this case every step of the way but the 4th Circuit has ruled and the 4th Circuit is clear. There are really no arguments left to be made."

How will same-sex marriage affect the Pennsylvania state inheritance tax if I pass away?

Prior to this ruling, Pennsylvania treated a surviving spouse as a stranger for the inheritance tax and imposed the 15% tax rate. The tax rate for married same-sex couples is now 0% for surviving spouses. This means that your assets and liabilities may be restructured without gift tax implications or estate tax implications. It is advised to have a meeting with a tax advisor and/or attorney to discuss this further.

What about Social Security benefits?

Social Security is now available for same-sex spousal benefits as well as widows and widowers of a same-sex spouse. There are also various social security claiming strategies for couples that may help maximize the benefits you and your same-sex spouse may receive.

May I now file my taxes in Pennsylvania with a married filing status?

If you were previously married in a state that recognized same-sex marriage you could file jointly on your federal tax returns but had to file individually in Pennsylvania. You may now file your Pennsylvania tax returns with a married filing status. In addition, you may choose to amend your previous three years of Pennsylvania tax returns. Please consult a tax advisor for further discussion.

How will my employer benefits be affected?

If you are married, you will follow your employer plan's rules regarding spousal beneficiary designations and distributions. This is very important in regards to survivor pension benefits and inheriting qualified plans. Also, if you cover your same-sex spouse under your company's health benefits, you will now be able to pay for those benefits before tax.

May I inherit my same-sex spouses IRA account upon their death?

Prior to the ruling, if a same-sex spouse inherited an IRA account from their spouse, they were considered legal strangers. You may now inherit the assets as a spouse and roll the funds into your own IRA account instead of an inherited IRA account.

Do I need to change my estate documents?

Your estate planning documents should be reviewed and possibly re-executed so the documents correctly reflect your new legal relationship. It is important to remember that even though you now live in a state that recognizes same-sex marriages, there are 31 states that do not recognize your relationship. Your documents need to reflect not only your wishes in Pennsylvania but also protect you if you move or travel to any of the states that do not recognize same-sex marriage. Any estate plan should be reviewed by an attorney who specializes in estate planning and is licensed to practice law in your state.

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How Does Same-Sex Marriage Affect Your Finances?

By Heidi M Duckworth, CRPC®, ADPA®
Financial Advisor

Gay service members cut off from earned veterans' benefits

Marriage Inequality

An uneven patchwork of states providing marriage equality harms military families the American Military Partner Association (AMPA) and OutServe-SLDN claim in a jointly filed an *amici curiae* brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. The brief addresses the cases of Baskin v. Bogan, Fujii v. Commissioner of the Indiana State Department of Revenue, and Lee v. Abbott, all decided by a federal district court in Indiana.

In the brief, AMPA and OutServe-SLDN argue that the uneven patchwork of states providing marriage equality harms military families, undermines national security, cuts off earned benefits to veterans, and harms veterans. The brief, on which the law firm Chadbourne & Parke serves as counsel, urges the Court to end the discrimination caused by the lack of marriage equality by recognizing a constitutional right for people of the same sex to marry on the same terms as opposite-sex couples.

"By refusing to recognize the legal marriages of our gay and lesbian service members, the governments of non-marriage equality states are cutting off these service members and their families from the important federal veterans' benefits that they earned serving our nation," said Stephen Peters, president of AMPA, Marine veteran, and spouse of an active duty Marine. "No service member or veteran deserves to be treated as a second class citizen. But until marriage equality is guaranteed in every state, gay and lesbian service members will continue to be denied what they have rightfully earned by sacrificing so much for our nation."

The brief asserts that: "…the VA [Department of Veterans Affairs] has made clear that it will not recognize even legal marriages of same-sex couples that are perfectly valid where their marriage was celebrated if the spouses travelled to that state while living in states that do not recognize marriage equality. That couple would have to move to a state that would recognize their marriage before the VA would recognize their marriage...It is perverse for the government to grant leave to enable a same-sex couple to travel to a state where they can legally marry, for the government to recognize that marriage as valid for however many more years the service member continues to serve, and then suddenly ignore that marriage as soon as the service member retires and obtains veteran's status. Likewise, it would be inequitable to force veterans to move away from their homes to marriage equality states so they and their spouses can get the federal veterans' benefits they earned."

This is the ninth brief filed jointly with the courts by AMPA and Outserve-SLDN this year.

Putting a Dent in Same-sex Marriage

U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent was recently criticized by the Lebanon County Republican Committee which objected to statements Dent made in support of same-sex marriage following Pennsylvania's May 20 decision knocking down the state's ban. The committee had voted to censure Dent, a Republican. Later committee chairman Casey Long said the committee will continue to support Dent in is re-election bid in November.

Dent said:

"The members of the Lebanon County Republican Committee and I are likely going to agree more than 90 percent of the time. This is just one of those issues where we have a difference of opinion.

As a Republican, I believe this issue is a matter of individual freedom and personal liberty. It is inconsistent to decry the overreach of Big Government with one breath and then demand that Big Government invade our homes and intrude in our personal lives with the next. I wish the members of the Committee had given me the courtesy to explain my stance to them before taking the action they hastily pursued.

Now that this is behind us, I look forward to working with the Committee and its members to ensure the success of our candidates in November."

PA Wedding Facility Enforces *'no same-sex couples'* Policy

Reprinted from LGBTQ Nation

A Pennsylvania wedding venue has come under fire for refusing to allow a same-sex couple to marry at its facility.

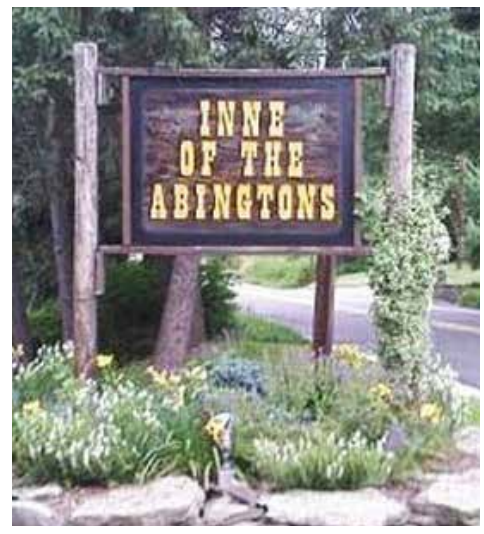
The *Scranton Times-Tribune* reports that The Inne of the Abingtons, located in North Abington, Pa., rejected a recent inquiry by a Greenfield Township woman to host her wedding at the facility because of her sexual orientation.

Desiree Mark, 29, says that when Pennsylvania's ban on same-sex marriage was ruled unconstitutional by a federal court, she abandoned her plans to be married in New York or Connecticut and instead focused on planning a wedding in her home state.

But when she sent queries to Scranton area wedding venues requesting an appointment, she learned that marriage equality does not mean equality for gays and lesbians.

"Unfortunately, we do not hold same sex marriages at our facility," read the email from Courtney Killeen, wedding and event planner for Inne at the Abingtons. "I truly do hope you find somewhere that will fulfill all your wedding dreams."

Killeen told the Times-Tribune it is the inn's policy to refuse service to same-sex couples. "I don't agree with it," she said, adding the policy was put in place by owner John O. Antolick.



Antolick did not respond to requests for a comment, and a local television says they were quickly asked to leave when approaching Antolick about the policy.

Many people in the community agree that the privately owned establishment has a right to turn down business, but many disagree with they reason why.

As Think Progress notes, the Inne's discrimination is perfectly legal:

"When the commonwealth became the 19th marriage equality state earlier this year, it also became the first state to offer same-sex marriage but absolutely no non-discrimination protections for the LGBT community. In Pennsylvania, it is legal to fire, refuse housing, and deny service to individuals just because of their sexual orientation and gender identity."

Last year, Pennsylvania lawmakers introduced a sweeping bill that would have established these protections, but it has yet to advance.

legal column

By Leo L. Dunn, Attorney at Law

Married? *Now what?*

This issue's questions are courtesy of *Central Voice* as a service to readers.

1. Can you provide readers with a checklist of what every married couple needs?

2. What if a couple was married in another state, not Pennsylvania?

In my opinion, every married couple should have living wills (also called health care directives), HIPPA waivers, financial powers of attorney, and wills at a minimum. You should also have what I call a "dummies' guide to taking care of your stuff if you can't."

Everyone over 18 should have a living will that states clearly who is to make health care decisions on your behalf if you are not able to do so for yourself. Typically, spouses name each other as primary and two alternates in case the first or second person has died or is not available. This should include provisions regarding mental health determination, visitation, and disposition of remains if you die. The disposition of remains provision sets forth who takes control of your body and what you want to occur. All provisions in a living will can be made either mandatory or discretionary on the part of the agent you name to be in charge.

HIPPA waivers are an adjunct to the living will. They make it crystal clear that the person making decisions also has the right of full access to your medical records in order to make those decisions in an informed manner. Some hospitals and doctors have been known to honor the living will but refuse to allow record access.

Financial power of attorneys designates who takes control of your finances if you cannot. They may also be used so that you can have someone else do transactions in your place in case you temporarily move to another location for work or you become disabled and have a hard time getting out of the house. They give you flexibility and security. Powers of attorney cease to function when you die.

Wills are only good if you die. A will should clearly state who gets your stuff when you die. If you die without one, your spouse does not automatically get everything. Your parents and any children you have from any previous relationship also have rights to a portion of your estate. Spouses have a right to an elective share of your property even if they are not named in your will. Having a will can eliminate parents and children's rights and clarify what you want your spouse to receive.

If you have minor children, your will should contain a guardianship provision and you should create a separate guardianship document and trust that clarifies who becomes guardian of your children if you both die and who controls any assets you leave behind. It is best to have these two functions separate. One person should control the finances and someone else should have custody and care for the children. These people should get along, but they should not be spouses.

Okay, you have living wills, powers of attorney, HIPPA waivers and wills naming each other as in control and getting everything, what else can you do?

A couple can place all real estate in joint ownership with right of survivorship. This means the title to the property transfers by law to the surviving spouse when the first dies.

Title all financial assets (savings and checking accounts, CDs, money markets, etc.) jointly with both names on the accounts. This means that the accounts are not frozen when the first spouse dies. Pennsylvania law gives spouses full access to such joint accounts from the moment the first spouse dies. No waiting!

Create your dummies list! What is this dummies' list?

The dummies' list provides a quick reference to every major thing you own, your medical contacts, financial information and where to find each in the event they are needed. It should list when you signed your living will, power of attorney, HIPPA waiver and will; it should state who is named primary in each; and where the originals are located. It should contain a list of all your real estate giving street address and tax parcel number. It should contain a list of all autos, boats and other major personal property with serial numbers and where the titles are located. It should list all doctors you visit on a regular basis, their phones numbers and office addresses. It should list all of your insurances (medical, life, auto, etc.) with the policy number, telephone number, name and address of the company. It should list your employer and their personnel office number if you are employed. It should list every financial account you own with the name, location and number of the institution as well as the account numbers. It should name your next of kin and friends you want informed in case you have a fatal illness or die. It should contain a list of all utilities and other bills you pay over the course of each year with name, address, telephone number and account number for each – include your real estate tax and sewer information! It should contain any other information that requires handling in case you become incapacitated or die.

Of course, you may need more than this. That's why you should consult with an attorney to determine if what you currently have covers all your needs.

The answer to question two is easy. As long as you have a marriage license from the other state, or country, that was valid in that jurisdiction when you were married, Pennsylvania will recognize it. There is one caveat: you cannot have married a parent, grandparent, sibling, or first cousin related to you by blood. Yes, some other places allow these.

Once Pennsylvania recognizes your marriage as valid, all Pennsylvania marriage rights apply. You will be covered by Pennsylvania inheritance tax law, divorce law, and every other of the 572 spousal rights. You will not need to worry about any other states' laws unless you own property in the other state or move there.

A note on divorce, Pennsylvania requires six months residency in Pennsylvania by one party regardless of where the marriage occurred.

If you have a general legal issue regarding estate planning or GLBT law you would like addressed in a future article, please email the question to me.

Leo Dunn is an attorney and counselor-at-law practicing in the Harrisburg area with a focus on the estate planning needs of the GLBT community. He may be reached at leo@leodunnlaw.com

Ally in the Academy

By Trum Simmons
Harrisburg Area Community College

I Was There

There has been much talk this year about the 1960s, with reminders about the Republican National Convention of 1964 and passage of LBJ's Civil Rights Act, for example.

There has been a lot of talk about the '60s ever since they ended some time in the early '70s, much of it well informed, much of it not. Most people hold the baby boomers responsible for all this attention, and the characterization of them has not been kind.

It's easy to generalize about us in negative terms. Many years ago I wrote an essay to my students about my experience in the '60s titled "I was there, and I haven't been the same since." I meant that to be positive.

For my experiences in those tumultuous times had a lot to do with who I am today, a newly retired college professor reflecting on just what my 40-year career in higher-ed has been about. I'm also a strong advocate for the LGBTQ communities here and around the world, which is why I write for *Central Voice*, and my concern for social justice was awakened and hammered out in the '60s.

The '60s began for me when I went to graduate school in 1966. In college from 1961 to 1965, I was aware of the social upheavals going on, but just barely. I attended a small Christian liberal-arts college in the Midwest; I was very self-involved and really couldn't see much beyond my day-to-day struggles.

I was getting a good education in the liberal arts, but it was not as good as it could have been, given that the college was so busy trying to inculcate its version of Christianity in the students. Our leaders said they wanted us to question everything, but most didn't really mean it.

In the spring of 1966 I went off to Nashville to study English literature at Vanderbilt University, and soon the ground began to shift under my feet. For the first time I was free from the hothouse atmosphere of my undergraduate life, and my mind and heart really started to open.

In the classroom I had the good fortune to have several professors who helped me learn to think for myself. This was liberating, and I made full use of it. It was also scary as hell.

My main mentor was a Shakespearean scholar who presented Shakespeare from a whole new perspective, one that blew my mind (yes, we talked that way then). In my second year I had a dream in which the prof was showing me what the world map really looked like, and it wasn't like anything I had seen before.

We were in outer space somewhere, and he was pointing me to look at the true nature of the world. Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey had not come out yet, but when I saw it soon after, the film really resonated with me.

My education outside the classroom was equally exhilarating and terrifying. I often spent as much time in civil rights and anti-war activities as I did studying for my courses. I sought out undergraduate and graduate students who were concerned about the same things, and we spent countless hours talking. Talking, feeling, questioning, searching--supporting one another in our struggles.

There was the human potential movement, which I embraced when I attended a weekend encounter group and once again had my world view expanded exponentially. I was reading Carl Rogers right next to Herman Melville and Walt Whitman, and it all fit together in a life-changing way.

I began this column by referencing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which while a major step forward for America, was incomplete in many ways. It was aimed at African-Americans, and it took a while for women to educate the country about the need for serious action on their civil rights as well.

And of course back then no one was talking publicly about civil rights for LGBTQ Americans. Had that matter been brought up in the U.S. Congress it would have been rejected out of hand.

My embracing of LGBTQ rights grew logically out of my increasing understanding of and advocacy for universal social justice. So when Stonewall happened, and the first gay pride parades were organized in the early 1970s, I was paying attention.

I arrived in Harrisburg in 1971--where the '60s were continuing--and soon was getting involved in LGBTQ issues. Students were coming out to me, and their stories hit hard. Yes, I was a budding feminist, and there were many opportunities to combat racism in Central PA, but gay rights was an issue too.

This is just a short version of my story of the 1960s, and you can see why I am wary of negative stereotypes of my generation. I was there, and I haven't been the same since—I am much the better for it. Learning about social justice led me on a lifelong path of promoting a principle that I trust is embraced by all readers of *Central Voice.*

Trum Simmons is professor emeritus of English and advisor emeritus to HACC Allies.

When a Kiss Is More than Just a Kiss:

Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony

Barely five minutes into the Opening Ceremony of the Commonwealth Games July 24 in Glasgow came a powerful scene that lasted less than 10 seconds and sent a message to the 42 member nations of the Commonwealth that outlaw homosexuality – and the television audience of an estimated one billion watching live worldwide. Openly gay Scottish-American actor/singer John (Captain Jack) Barrowman dashed over to a lone male dancer, gave him a kiss and then the two ran off to "Gretna Green" to get married. This was no spur of the moment action – it was part of the opening production number. Glasgow hosted an official "Pride House" for the duration of the "friendly games". As was the case at the Winter Olympics earlier this year, openly gay Claire Balding co-hosted the television coverage for BBC, the host broadcaster for the Commonwealth Games.

Asheville *cont'd from pg. 12*

can also sip wine, beer and coffee in a cozy lounge space. One of the most venerable indie bookstores in the South, Malaprops Bookstore and Café (malaprops.com) has a large LGBT section and a nice little coffeehouse inside. And also very popular with the gay crowd, Edna's of Asheville (ednasofasheville.com) is on the north side of the city and serves terrific coffee drinks, breakfast fare and sandwiches.

Virtually all of Asheville's nightspots, including many of the drink-centric restaurants described above, have a strong following with the LGBT crowd. There are also a few predominantly gay hangouts, the largest being the Grove House Entertainment Complex (thegrovehouse.com), a rambling building that contains Scandals dance club, the Boiler Room live-music venue, and Club Eleven on Grove for events and parties. Nearby Club Hairspray (clubhairspray.com) is beloved for its kitschy interior, entertaining drag (queen and king) shows and friendly vibe. Drawing a mostly male crowd, O'Henry's (ohenrysofasheville.com) is a fun neighborhood hangout that's particularly popular with bearish types and fans of leather – the bar has been going strong for more than 35 years and adjoins neighboring dance bar, the Underground. Downtown bar-hoppers might want to stop by Smokey's After Dark (facebook.com/smokys.afterdark), a laid-back, no-attitude neighborhood spot that's fun for shooting pool and meeting locals. And women-owned Tressa's (tressas.com) – with live jazz and blues, comedy, and dancing – has a loyal following in the LGBT community.

Asheville has several inviting, gay-friendly inns, from upscale historic mansions to cozy Arts and Crafts cottages. The city's most renowned accommodation is the Grove Park Inn Resort and Spa (groveparkinn.com), one of the nation's foremost historic hotels, which has been fully restored to its original 1913 Arts and Crafts design. You'll find one of the South's most impressive spas on the lower level, and restaurants and bars affording panoramic views of the city skyline and surrounding mountains. Among the dining options, don't miss Edison, which serves tasty small-plates fare (goat-cheese flatbread, an awesome burger with bacon jam and American cheese) and terrific craft beers. Even if you don't stay here, sitting in the grand lobby before the enormous fireplace, and looking out over the countryside from the terrace is a real treat.

Herb and rose gardens surround the 1889 shingle-style White Gate Inn & Cottage (whitegate.net), one of the city's gay-owned properties (commitment ceremonies are frequently held here). The romantic, antiques-filled rooms have Wi-Fi and flat-screen TVs with DVD and CD players – they're named for poets (Whitman, Wilde, Sandburg, etc.), and one cottage has a gas fireplace and full kitchen. Also gay-owned and a 10- to 15-minute drive north of downtown, the 1847 Reynolds Mansion B&B (thereynoldsmansion.com) has 13 beautiful rooms (many with gas or wood fireplaces), a seasonal pool and lavish three-course breakfasts included in the rates. Another stunner is the shingle-style Inn on Montford (innonmontford.com), which dates to 1900 and sits on beautifully landscaped grounds that include the largest Norway maple tree in North Carolina. Rooms contain a priceless mix of 18th- and 19th-century English and American pieces.

Fans of larger chain properties should consider the contemporary Aloft (aloftashevilledowntown.com), which is right on Biltmore Avenue, steps from a number of great restaurants, bars and shops. With super-clean rooms and terrific service, the Hampton Inn Asheville-Tunnel Road (hamptoninn3.hilton.com) ranks among the best mid-priced chain options in the region. And with a convenient location near the Grove Arcade, the sleek Hotel Indigo Asheville (ihg.com) is another great choice, with crisp, attractive rooms – the penthouse suites on the upper stories have floor-to-ceiling windows and amazing views of the countryside.

Andrew Collins produces the website Gay-Travel.About.com and writes about travel for a variety of LGBT and mainstream publications.

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Marla Cattermole, Plaintiff

Come celebrate, along with our honorees, marriage equality and the hard work of the ACLU, Julie Lobur and Marla Cattermole to overturn the PA gay marriage ban!

LGBT center

Fall Achievement Benefit (FAB) is a key source of funding for The LGBT Center of Central PA. For information on The LGBT Center or to become a sponsor or advertiser of FAB 2014, please email **fab@centralpalgbtcenter.org** or call 717-920-9534.

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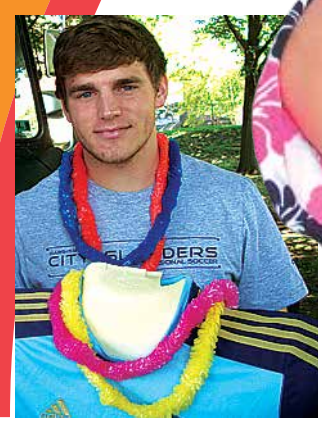

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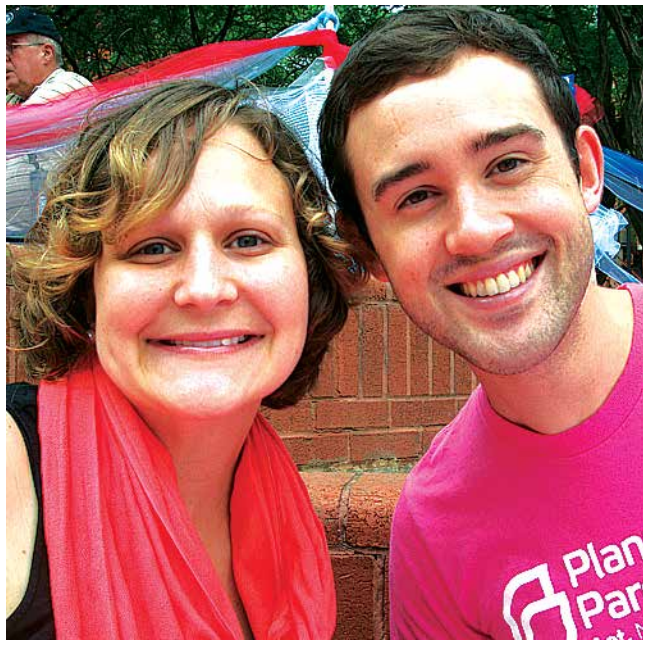

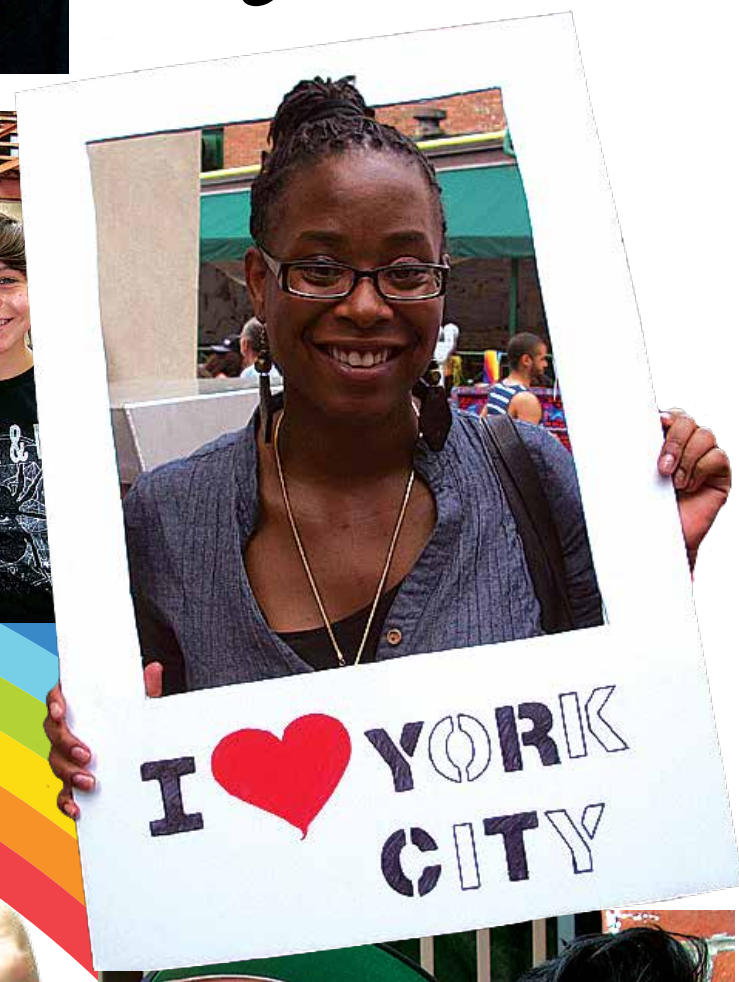

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For the last four years, The Unexpected Boys have amazed audiences and garnered international acclaim as the top Four Seasons tribute act in the world! They have headlined in such cities and venues as The Atlantis Hotel and Resort in Dubai, Formula One Singapore, The Pentagon, Yankee Stadium, to name but a few. They have also opened for Diana Ross, Dionne Warwick, Deborah Cox, and Chubby Checker, and were recently featured on the season finale of The Housewives of New York on The Bravo Network.
717-214-ARTS (2787)

STRAND CAPITAL
Mike Birbiglia: Thank God For Jokes Comedy Tour
Sept. 11, 7:30 p.m.
Award-winning comedian, author, and filmmaker Mike Birbiglia returns to the stage with more painfully awkward stories in a show about jokes and how they can get you in trouble. Join Birbiglia as he gets arrested in New Jersey, screamed at by a famous director, heckled by Statler and Waldorf, and attacked by zombie rodents.
www.mystrandcapitol.org

MAJESTIC THEATRE
Gettysburg College
The MET Live in HD: Macbeth
Oct. 11, 1 – 4:30 p.m.

The Metropolitan Opera's groundbreaking series: The Met: Live in HD is LIVE at the Majestic Theater. Broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera from Lincoln Center will be shown on the historical Majestic Theater's screen and enhanced by live interviews and a look at behind-the-scenes action. Star soprano Anna Netrebko delivers her searing portrayal of Lady Macbeth, the mad and murderous mate of Željko Lucic's doomed Macbeth. Adrian Noble's chilling production of Verdi's masterful adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy also stars Joseph Calleja as the noble Macduff and René Pape as Banquo. Fabio Luisi conducts.
Info: 717-337-8200; boxofficeinfo@gettysburg.edu

SHARADIN BIGLER THEATRE
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Few musicals have proven as enduringly popular as this mesmerizing tale set in 1929 Berlin, where Cliff Bradshaw, a young American writer, has come in search of something to write about. He finds what he's looking for in this city full of sexual allure, cultural and political turmoil, and fascinating people, among them the enchanting cabaret singer Sally Bowles, with whom he becomes romantically involved; Fraulein Schneider, his crusty but endearing landlady; Herr Schultz, her kindly Jewish suitor who owns a thriving fruit store; and the Master of Ceremonies of the cabaret where Sally performs, who may be a bit more than he at first seems.
Tickets: (717) 733-7966; epacboxoffice@gmail.com

HERSHEY THEATRE
Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
Sept. 23 - 28

One of the most enduring shows of all time, Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber's Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat is the irresistible family musical about the trials and triumphs of Joseph, Israel's favorite son. HersheyTheatre.com.

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA EVENTS

• Rock Ford Plantation - *Through October*
881 Rockford Road, Lancaster, Wed. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
The Rock Ford Plantation or the General Edward Hand House is a historic house in West Lampeter Township, Lancaster County listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The plantation stands on the banks of the Conestoga River and is believed to be haunted by the ghost of General Hand's son, who allegedly committed suicide in the house around 1809. *(717) 392-7223*

• Motoring Mysteries of the Far East - *Through Sept. 14*
Antique Automobile Club of America, 161 Museum Dr, Hershey, PA 17033
The AACA Museum will celebrate and showcase the early roots and later creations of the Asian and Russian motoring industry and their impact within the United States. From the Pre-War years to the Kei class microcars of the 1960s, to the trucks and sports cars to appear later, these unique and seldom-seen vehicles are examples of an important historical part of the auto industry. *717-566-7100*

• The Magic of Mystery Clocks - *Through Dec. 1*
National Watch & Clock Museum, 514 Poplar St, Columbia, PA 17512
Who doesn't like a little magic? Clockmakers are no different and developed a style commonly known as the "mystery clock". A mystery clock is one that at first glance has no visible means of connecting a movement to the hands marking the time. Some of the most famous mystery clocks are believed to have been inspired and built by famous French magician and clockmaker Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin. *717-684-8261, ext 237*

A Love Story Across Genders

I looked forward to reading *Queerly Beloved: a Love Story across Genders* by Diane and Jacob Anderson-Minshall. There are too few books by transgendered authors about their experiences. Diane and Suzy had been together for 15 years, happily, madly in love and active in the lesbian community in San Francisco when Suzy decided, after years of self-exploration and body-dysmorphia, that she wanted to transition to a male. Jacob, the man, emerged from this change, and the story of how he lived through the pain and confusion of the process to arrive at the deep satisfaction he feels now makes for an interesting, if uneven, book. The best parts are written by Jacob. He tells us how it feels, emotionally and physically, to have his breasts removed. Despite the painful healing process, he is glad that part of him is gone. In a particularly eye-opening section, he explains the physical, mental and psychological effects of testosterone. His now less sensitive skin is like "a barrier between the world and me…as though I'm sheathed head to toe in a giant condom." Once described as "too sensitive", crying easily and having emotional highs and lows, his "emotional range has narrowed, the ups and downs have evened out, feelings flattened and quieted." He also writes about by the surprising amount of androphobia he encounters from women he meets in many different situations.

Jacob's friends and family members have mixed reactions to him, and acquaintances feel it is ok to ask him deeply personal questions. He shares with us his love for Diane and his fear of losing her. Diane describes her anxieties and worries, including her fear of losing Suzy/Jacob and her deep commitment to helping Jacob have the "best transition anyone could have." She nurses him after his surgery and gives him tips on how to act like a guy, using Ryan Seacrest as her model of the kind of man she wants Jacob to be. Diane was a publisher at *Curve* magazine when Jacob began his transition and feared losing her job (she did not) and her identification to others as a lesbian. Diane is adamant that she still self-identifies as a lesbian, regardless of what others think.

Self-described "role models" in the LGBTQ community, both Diane and Jacob have strong political feelings and voice them often in the book. They describe their work in detail, and Diane writes at length about her time at *Curve Magazine* and the bad behavior of her competitors at *GirlFriends*. These sections of the book, and a long chapter on their work as foster parents are marginally related to Jacob's transition, but feel out of place, used more to express their disgruntled feelings about Diane's competitors and the foster care program they have since left, than as part of their experience with Jacob's transition and its effect on both of them. The book was written over the course of several years, and the lack of good editing is apparent. A number of sections are repetitious and the book feels disjointed. Numerous typos and grammatical problems were frustrating for this reader, who expects adequate editing and proofing in a book released by a even a small publishing house.

Despite its problems, Diane's and Jacob's story is often interesting and always heartfelt. It is an important addition to the body of literature on the transgender experience.

Also recommended:
True Stories Too by Felice Picano
She's Not There: a Life in Two Genders by Jennifer Finney Boylan
Transition: the Story of How I Became a Man by Chaz Bono
Through the Door of Life: a Jewish Journey between Genders by Joy Ladin
The Testosterone Files: My Hormonal and Social Transformation from Female to Male by Max Wolf Valerio
Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More by Janet Mock

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book reviews

By Deborah Battisti & Lori Lane
Dauphin County Library System
www.dcls.org

Now in its 26th year, Harrisburg Gallery Walk continues to showcase new sites and surprise with innovations.

On Sun., Sept. 14, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. 30 galleries and studios will welcome visitors and delight with original art, live music and refreshments.

As a special treat, "NO LAST CALL" band, Harrisburg's only hit-and-run street band, will be playing around the Gallery Walk route throughout the day. Sutliff Chevrolet will run a free shuttle service from downtown to uptown.

www.artassocofhbg.com

Pittsburgh's Jason Walker Mixes It Up

By Central Voice

Pittsburgh native Jason Walker tells Central Voice "when the inspiration strikes I go to work." And work he does. The Out Music Award winner mixes soul, disco and a generous dose of electro savvy to create his explosive re-imagining of Taylor Dayne's pop classic, *Tell It To My Heart*. The remix/remake is a hot tune on the playlist.

Walker grew up in Pittsburgh, singing in blues bands and his church choir. Now there's a combination which may account for his florid voice. And his impressive vocal range may have something to do with his success. His vocal range was apparent during our telephone interview even when using his speaking voice, a mellifluous sound to the ear.

Walker's savvy may, in part, be the result of rubbing records with the '80s infamous DJ Junior Vasquez, originally from Lancaster, and who kept legions of club kids dancing until way after the sun comes up with his pounding house beats and stellar skills on the turntables. Vasquez's fame took him from clubs in New York to Tokyo, mixing beats for divas from Madonna to Cher.

In 2006, Vasquez told *Central Voice* he'd advise an aspiring artist/DJ/singer to "do it for the love of music, and obviously not for the paycheck, because that doesn't come for a while.

You've got to make your own niche." Walker is making his own niche and doping Vasquez one better - he can not only mix, remix, and produce he can also sing the songs himself. He hit the national spotlight with a winning performance on TV's It's Show Time at the Apollo. Soon afterward, he was signed to JVM Records, a label headed by dance music icon Junior Vasquez. Over the next five years, Walker released two albums, "This Is My Life" and "Flexible".

Walker's *Tell It To My Heart* features Bimbo Jones – sporting remixes by Toy Armada and DJ Grind, Shay E, Dany Cohiba, Fran Guzman, SplashFunk, Hadjas and Quentin Harris plus a light-hearted video clip lensed by Patti Nieto.

"I have never been this excited about a record," explains an enthusiastic Jason Walker from his home in New York City. "Taylor Dayne is one of my favorite singers of all time and Tell It To My Heart is a classic. There isn't a person on the planet that doesn't know and love the song. When Bill Coleman suggested I cover it, I was all for it."

"Jason Walker's diva vocals are among the best in NYC," says Bill Coleman, president of the dance music label, Peace Bisquit. "We have talked about collaborating on something for years and when this project came about, I knew the time was now."

And now is Jason Walker's time.

Info: JasonWalkermusic.com

Kristine W's Dis-connection

By Mark Dawson

"*So Close To Me* is a celebration of the magic of spending time with loved ones," explains party diva Kristine W about the latest single from her *New and Number Ones* record.

She hopes *the song* will serve as a reminder to club fans that no matter how many electronic gadgets are invented, there is no stronger connection than real human contact. "People need to turn off their devices," she says. "Real face-to-face quality time with the people you love is key to a happy life."

Kristine isn't only referring to romantic love. "Family and coworkers count too," she clarifies.

That's why she chose to include her backup dancers in the song's music video. "We've been working together for years, traveling the world, performing songs like *Land of the Living*, *One More Try*, *Stronger* and *Feel What You Want* together. It felt right to include them in the video."

"My dancers are my support system on the road," she continues. "We laugh, cry, share ideas… We appreciate the special time we get to spend with one another on the tour bus. Sure, it can be tight at times but it's allowed us to build such a wonderfully unique and close bond and I wouldn't change it for anything."

Are people out of control with technology?

Kristine W: I think we all rely too much on our gadgets. Phones and computers have become a safety glass separating real life from the cyber world we create for ourselves. We are losing our ability to truly connect with one another.

Do you monitor the amount of time you spend online?

I have the ringer on my phone set to off quite a bit. That way, I can focus on what I'm doing at the moment or really listen to that person who needs me to be totally present.

What one technology could you not live without?

I Skype a lot, especially for business. It's useful for speaking with producers and remixers in other countries. It has saved me a lot of time I would have spent traveling.

So you're not anti-technology?

Not at all. Technology is an amazing! It's only when we overuse and abuse it that it becomes harmful. We shouldn't substitute technology for real life connection.

How do you get away from the technology?

I hang with my kids and friends. I ride my horses. I write songs and play my instrument. I love to hike, power walk and go to fitness classes and, of course, church. There are lots to do!

You also spend a lot of time on the road. Does it get lonely?

Not at all. Every show is a creative adventure. I've been traveling with the same dancers and musicians for almost a decade. They're my other family.

Do you fight like family?

We don't argue. That would be counterproductive in a creative environment. But we have had strong conflicting opinions about choreography and show ideas. We are all secure enough in our relationship to be honest about how we feel. In the end, the best ideas win, even if they aren't mine. *(Laughs)*

Whose idea was it to release so many remixes of *So Close To Me*?

We were only going to release the two CDs of remixes but as the single got more popular, we received more offers from DJs and producers. Soon, we had over 30 remixes and I was blown away by how great they all were! I wanted them to be available to the fans. I couldn't fit them all on two CDS so we had to make a third.

Releasing three albums has to be expensive.

Oh yes. It's a labor of love really because artists don't make much money selling physical CDs these days. You have to pay the graphic people, the mastering house, editors who make sure all the info is correct so we don't have to do a repressing. It's a lot but I do it for the collectors who prefer their CDs over digital mp3s. CDs are something tangible. Collectors enjoy the artwork and the overall personalization of having a physical copy.

How did you pay for it?

We were out of money after the second remix album so the third is a literally a gift to fans from everyone on the *New and Number One* team. I really have to thank the tribe of talented remixers who agreed to make it happen with me.

Do you have a favorite remix?

I love them all. How could I not? They offer such a wide variety of sounds. It's truly amazing. But so is the team we have assembled for this project. Every day I count my blessings for the first class people in my life that I am lucky to have so close to me.

For more information, visit KristineW.com.

Free Day at Harris-Cameron Mansion

The Harris-Cameron Mansion will open its doors free of charge on Sat., Sept. 27 as part of Smithsonian magazine's ninth annual Museum Day Live. A nationwide event, Museum Day Live offers free admission to visitors presenting a Museum Day Live ticket at a participating museum or cultural institution.

Guided tours will be available at 1:00 pm, 2:00 pm and 3:00 pm. Tours will include the new exhibit, "Star Spangled Banner: Harrisburg's Connection to our National Anthem."

The Museum Day Live! ticket is available to download at www.smithsonianmag.com/accounts/register/.

The Harris-Cameron Mansion was built c. 1766 by John Harris, Jr., one of the founders of Harrisburg. In 1863, it was purchased by Simon Cameron, Lincoln's first Secretary of War and later Ambassador to Russia. Cameron transformed the Georgian house into a stylish Victorian mansion and lived there until his death in 1889. The house became the headquarters of the Historical Society of Dauphin County in 1941.

For more information, call 233-3462, e-mail office@dauphincountyhistory.org, or visit www.dauphincountyhistory.org.

9 New LGBT Documentaries Supported by Arcus

The Arcus Foundation has announced a lineup of nine lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) -themed documentary films that are to receive support from the newly established Arcus Foundation Fund at Sundance Institute.

Established in 2013, the Arcus Foundation Fund provides direct grants to support independent, high potential documentary film projects focused on LGBT issues. The grants are given to projects in various stages of development, production, and distribution. The Fund also provides creative, tactical, and financial support to filmmakers who wish to self-distribute their films, retain the rights to their work, and devise their own audience-building strategies through Sundance Institute's #Artist-Services Program.

"Filmmaking has always been a powerful medium for directly engaging audiences on complex issues and informing public conversations that drive social progress," said Jason McGill, Vice President, Social Justice Programs. "LGBT people have benefited tremendously in recent decades by courageously becoming more visible in and accepted by their families, faith communities and workplaces. We see great potential to reinforce this visibility and acceptance through documentary films that reveal and celebrate the diverse lived experiences of LGBT people. The Arcus Fund at Sundance Institute reflects our commitment to ensuring that their lives are increasingly demystified and supported."

The Arcus Foundation Fund is housed under the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program. Eligible film projects were awarded funding based on the following criteria: quality of information and storytelling effectiveness; the pressing nature of the contemporary social issue; global subject relevance; potential for reach and impact; creative and artistic innovation; and potential for completion. For more information on Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program, please visit: www.sundance.org/documentary.

Selected films in various stages of development:

The New Black (U.S.)
Director: Yoruba Richen

The New Black is a documentary that tells the story of how the African-American community is grappling with the gay rights issue in light of the recent gay marriage movement and the fight over civil rights. The film documents activists, families and clergy on both sides of the campaign to legalize gay marriage and examines homophobia in the black community's institutional pillar—the black church and reveals the Christian right wing's strategy of exploiting this phenomenon in order to pursue an anti-gay political agenda. The film screened at Midtown Cinema's recent LGBT Film Festival.

From This Day Forward (U.S.)
Director: Sharon Shattuck

Filmmaker Sharon Shattuck explores love, sexuality, art, and commitment in a verité portrait of her family just before her own wedding. When her artist father, Michael, comes out as a transgender woman, Sharon and her sister are in their awkward middle school years. Dealing with family and societal pressures, Michael—now called Trisha—and his wife Marcia, decide to separate. After a few heartbreaking months, they realize they still want to be together. Decades later, as Sharon is planning her own wedding, she delves into her parents' relationship using interviews, home movies and Trisha's artwork. The film will explore what it takes to stay together against incredible odds.

Sylvia & Marsha (U.S.)
Director: David France

Sylvia & Marsha celebrates the first modern transgender activists who together, co-founded STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries) and set in motion a profound cultural shift carried on today by trans people asserting their rights.

Blue ID (Turkey)
Directors: Burcu Melekoglu, Vuslat Karan

Former Elite Model and actress, now trans man, Rüzgar Erkoçlar struggles under the spotlight in traditional, conservative Turkey for self-realization and acceptance. Constrained by identification cards color-coded for gender, will he finally be considered for a Blue ID?

Brick (U.S.)
Directors: Jessica Dimmock, Christopher LaMarca

Five fathers and grandfathers risk losing their families to live as transgender women within the Pacific Northwest's hyper-masculine culture.

Growing Up Coy (U.S.)
Director: Eric Juhola

Growing Up Coy is a feature documentary that follows a landmark trans-gender-rights case in Colorado where a 6-year-old transgender girl named Coy has been banned from the girls' bathroom at her school. Coy's parents hire a lawyer, and the family is thrust into the international media spotlight, causing their lives to change forever.

Out in the Night (U.S.)
Director: Blair Doroshwalther

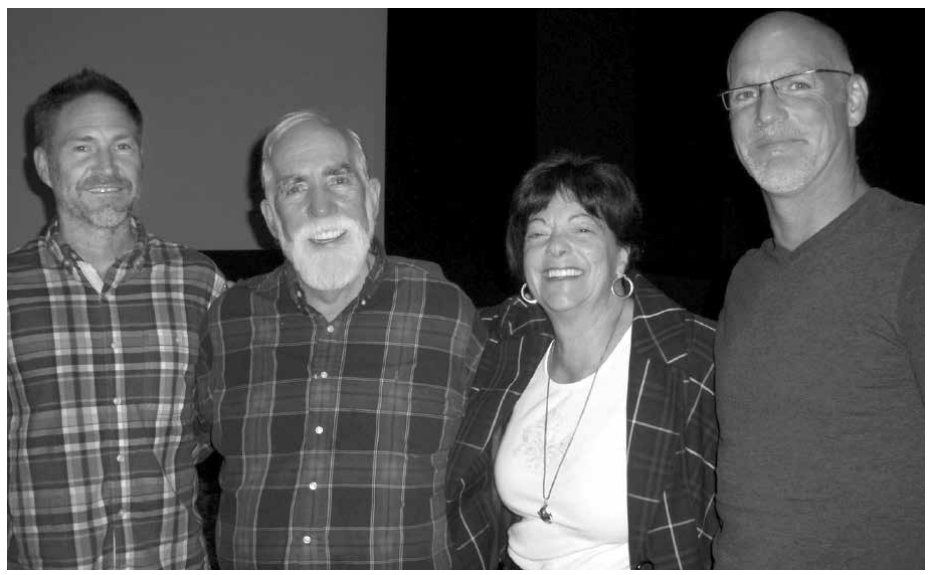
The story of four friends, out for a night in New York City, who became known as a "Gang of Killer Lesbians" when they defended themselves.

Out Run (U.S.)
Directors: Johnny Symons, S. Leo Chiang

Out Run follows Ladlad, the only LGBT political party in the world, on its historic quest to elect a transgender woman to the Philippine Congress through an unconventional strategy by mobilizing a national network of working-class gay and transgender hairdressers to be their grassroots campaign organizers.

Before You Know It (U.S.)
Director: PJ Raval

The subjects of Before You Know It are no ordinary senior citizens. They are go-go booted bar-hoppers, love struck activists, troublemaking baton twirlers, late night Internet cruisers, seasoned renegades and bold adventurers. They are also among the estimated 2.4 million lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans over the age of 55 in the United States, many of whom face heightened levels of discrimination, neglect and exclusion. But Before is not a film about cold statistics and gloomy realities, it's a film about generational trailblazers who have surmounted prejudice and defied expectation to form communities of strength, renewal and camaraderie—whether these communities be affable senior living facilities, lively activist enclaves or wacky queer bars brimming with glittered trinkets and colorful drag queens.



LGBT film festival

July 13-15 the LGBT Community Center held an LGBT film festival. The festival was supported by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Harrisburg Jewish Film Festival, and Midtown Cinema. Rabbi Hava Lynn Pell, third from the left in this photo, Central Voice columnist Trum Simmons and Shaashawn Dial-Snowden each lead post-screening discussions on various nights of the three-day festival.

Congratulations
The lucky winners of Cher concert tickets are:
Joseph Harner
Drawn from Central PA Pride Fest
Ser David Shaulis
Drawn from Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber events
Wayne Noss
Drawn from thecentralvoice.ning.com membership
CONTEST SPONSORED BY:
Central VOICE

1st Openly Transgender State Legislator?

If successful in her campaign, Nevada Republican Lauren Scott may be nation's first openly transgender state legislator, according to the Washington Blade's Chris Johnson. "I would say I'm a really good candidate," Scott said. "I think people know me. They know the work that I've done on business and civil rights issues, so I'm very credible, I guess, unlike other people who may run just because they're trans and just for the press. It's about making Nevada a better place to live and work for everybody. That's what I'm focusing on." Scott is seeking to represent District 30 in the Nevada State Assembly.

MD to Provide Transgender State Employees Coverage

FreeState Legal announced today that the State of Maryland has changed its employee health care policy to remove all language that denies coverage to transgender people for transition-related health care. The change came in response to a legal claim filed by Free State Legal on behalf of Sailor Holobaugh. Mr. Holobaugh, who is a state employee, was denied insurance coverage for a medically necessary bilateral mastectomy because he is transgender.

"Maryland has moved one step closer to achieving full equality and justice for transgender Marylanders," said Aaron Merki, Executive Director of FreeState Legal. "We applaud this development, and look forward to a time when these discriminatory exclusions are removed from all public and private health insurance policies."

"My experience as a social worker and a Scout has made me appreciate the importance of persevering for change and equality," Holobaugh said. "I am thrilled that people who serve Maryland as State employees now have increased access to health services, and that they can extend these benefits to their dependents."

In its decision, the State has agreed to settle Holobaugh's claim by reimbursing him for his surgical procedure. The State has also removed the transition-related care exclusion from all of the state employee health plans, and is implementing a new, comprehensive Gender Dysphoria Benefit in its place.

The new Gender Dysphoria Benefit is effective immediately and provides coverage for transition-related treatment that is medically necessary, including hormone replacement therapy and a variety of surgical procedures. The benefit applies to all participants in the State's health benefit program for state employees and retirees, including state employees and retirees and their spouses and dependents. The standard for medical necessity under the benefit closely tracks the "Standards of Care" established by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), which is internationally recognized as the leading authority on health care for transgender persons.

Maryland now becomes the third state in the nation to provide nondiscriminatory health coverage to state employees and retirees who are transgender. It follows Oregon and California, which established similar coverage changes in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

In 2013, Holobaugh, who is employed by the University of Maryland - Baltimore, sought reimbursement for a medically necessary bilateral mastectomy through the State of Maryland Employee & Retiree Health & Benefits Program. His claim was denied on the basis of an exclusion which barred any "procedure or treatment designed to alter an individual's physical characteristics to those of the opposite sex."

In November 2013, Holobaugh, represented by Free State Legal, filed an Equal Employment Opportunity complaint against the State, alleging that the transition-related health care exclusion violated Governor O'Malley's 2007 executive order prohibiting discrimination in state employment on the basis of gender identity. An additional complaint with the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights was filed in January 2014.

"With the passage this year of the Fairness for All Marylanders Act and the establishment of the state employee Gender Dysphoria Benefit, Maryland is making great strides toward transgender equality," said Jer Welter, Managing Attorney of Free State Legal, who represented Holobaugh. "However, there is still work to be done, including the elimination of similar transition-related care exclusions in the Maryland Medical Assistance (Medicaid) program and in policies issued by private insurers regulated by the Maryland Insurance Administration. Free State Legal will continue to work diligently on these issues to further ensure that equal and fair health care coverage is a staple for all LGBTQ Marylanders."

Free State Legal would like to thank Governor O'Malley and his administration for moving forward with this decision and expanding transgender rights in the State of Maryland. With the passage of the Fairness for All Marylanders Act during the 2014 legislative session and the decision in Mr. Holobaugh's case, Maryland is now one of the states with the strongest protections and services for transgender state employees.

transgender today

By Jeanine Ruhsam
president of TransCentralPA

Transgender Tipping Point?

Pushback against the "Transgender Tipping Point" continues today with quite unlikely entities seemingly becoming allies in their effort to renounce the existence of transgender people and their claim to civil and human rights.

On August 4 The New Yorker ran an article titled, "What is a Woman? The dispute is between radical feminism and transgenderism, which just happened to be timed to coincide with the annual revival of the Michigan Women's Music Festival.

MichFest, as it is called, is controversial because of its womyn-born-womyn admission policy, which effectively bars transgender women from attending. The acronym "TERF"- for Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist- was born out of this policy, and the more emphatic among this group of mostly lesbian radical feminists have recently been raising their voices in opposition to the growing public acceptance of transgender people. They- the TERFs- find themselves locked arm-in-arm with the Far Right in their mutual effort to ban transgender women from sex-segregated spaces. While both groups fervently agree that penises should not be allowed in women-only spaces, they do so for very opposite and fundamental reasons.

TERFs have a rather legitimate bone to pick: penises are the real and symbolic weapon of patriarchal oppression, used to violate women's bodies and to force them into a position of subservience in a male dominated gender hierarchy. Thus, any person with a penis, or one who was born with a penis, has or has had privilege in the patriarchal system; therefore transgender women are seen as imposters, as men in disguise, and as oppressors of women. Those on the Far Right, however, are the very bastion of patriarchy; their mission is to uphold and preserve it and their place of power at its top. Heteronormativity maintains the hierarchical gender binary and its system of compulsory heterosexuality and it is absolutely essential to patriarchy.

To the Far Right, trans women are men with natural heterosexual urges who desire to covertly enter sex-segregated space to gain access to women's bodies and to sexually impose themselves on the "weaker sex." This is an affrontery to the patriarchal view of the world in which they- real men- are the guardians of females, and as such only they have rightful access to women's bodies for sex.

The irony of this collaboration between lesbians and misogynists is not hard to appreciate, revolving as it does around the penis. Both parties rely on sexuality and bodily desire as the single factor involved, ignoring the fact that for transgender people, gender is not about who you go to bed with, it is about who you go to bed as. The fact remains that this is a stumbling block - the phallus, that is. For a couple of decades it has been acceptable to talk about the "transgender umbrella" that spreads its rainbow canopy over all gender non-conforming people, treating transsexuals, cross-dressers (transvestites) and drag queens alike. I argue this conflation of diverse types is a problem and that it may be a major part of the stumbling block. The recent brouhaha surrounding celebrity drag queen RuPaul's use of the terms "tranny" and "she-male" makes this evident, as does research on those who cross dress. Drag queens, long a part of gay male culture, parody women: they do not identify as women. Cross dressers, some of whom are very passable, impersonate women for largely erotic reasons: they do not identify as women.

Research indicates that nearly 5% of the adult U.S. male population routinely cross dress, and as part of their role playing enters women-only spaces. Transgender people, however, are currently defined as those who identify as the gender opposite their birth sex. Thus, a transgender woman- though she was identified by her genitalia at birth as a male- identifies as a woman. If she lives full time in her chosen identity, whether or not she has taken steps through hormones or surgery to alter the secondary sexual attributes of her body, she is termed a transsexual. But, no matter: less than 1/3 of 1% of Americans today identify as transgender.

If we, as a society, heed the TERFs and the Far Right and ban transgender men and women from the sex-segregated spaces that match their identities, what do we do with them? Are their numbers so small that we simply reject them? We live in a culture- a sexist, patriarchal culture- that only allows two genders. Medicine, the Law and the Academy all agree that gender identity is real and valid. Where, then, are true transgender people supposed to go when they are given either an "M" or an "F" to choose from? The answer seems obvious. In the meanwhile, the umbrella concept needs to be furled and deference shown by those it previously covered to those who are not role playing. So long as male cross dressers and drag queens invade women-only space, the effort to deny the identity of transgender people will understandably continue.

Jeanine Ruhsam, eight-term President of TransCentralPA, holds an MA in American Studies and is currently pursuing her PhD. in the same field.

LGBT community center coalition

By Louie Marven
Executive Director
LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA

How Do We Productively Talk about LGBTQ Youth Suicide?

It's that time of the year when students head back to school, and in our LGBT communities we remember and draw attention to some of the negative experiences faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students.

In the nearly three years in my role as executive director of The Center, and after three preceding years directing The Center's Common Roads youth programs, I have hoped to play a role in advancing the narrative on LGBTQ youth experiences. To me, part of advancing that role has to do with simultaneously honoring and addressing the negative experiences LGBTQ students face in schools and communities while also remembering to celebrate the leadership, creativity, and resilience of LGBTQ youth.

Another layer of developing a more nuanced narrative of LGBTQ youth experiences is discussing suicide in a productive way – in a way that does not further stigmatize people who have had suicidal ideation and that does not contribute to what is known as "suicide contagion."

In its report, "Talking about Suicide and LGBT Populations," the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) calls the phenomenon of suicide contagion the "link between certain kinds of public visibility and media coverage about suicide, and increases in suicide deaths." It reports that we can reduce suicide contagion when the public discourse on suicide is responsible.

The full report can be accessed at www.lgbtmap.org, and I recommend it as a great read for anyone in a leadership position or who otherwise plays a role in shaping public discourse – including anyone who likes to chime in on current events using social media!

In my opinion, one of the most useful tips from the report is to not "normalize suicide by presenting it as the logical consequence of the kinds of bullying, rejection, discrimination, and exclusion that LGBT people often experience." I see this kind of messaging that normalizes suicide show up in well-intentioned efforts to address bullying and suicide, but it can actually cause more harm to communicate some kind of direct, causal link between the two. Suicide is absolutely NOT a natural response to bullying, and to hastily suggest otherwise teaches people who are experiencing bullying the wrong way to navigate that experience.

Instead, as the topic of LGBTQ suicide inevitably comes up, let's emphasize our individual and communal responsibility toward supporting healthy communities, let's encourage seeking out help when experiencing suicidal ideation, and let's teach our communities about what resources are available. And let's not add to the noise by "liking" and sharing articles with problematic headlines about teens being "bullied to death" on Facebook and Twitter!

At The Center, we welcome the start of a new year by providing technical assistance to the student and staff leadership of local gay-straight alliances. Common Roads youth programs continue to take place weekly in Harrisburg on Wednesdays, in Carlisle on Thursdays, and in Lancaster on Fridays, where LGBTQ youth ages 14-22 gather in a safe space to participate in social and educational programming.

The mission of the LGBT Center of Central PA is to create common ground for the LGBT community and allies in central Pennsylvania by providing services through educational, cultural, and community activities that foster wholeness.

Why Be Normal?

Do you remember what it was like being a teenager? Boys and girls going through the cycle of adolescence find themselves in a paradox. Their bodies and minds are developing a sense of separation and independence from their parents. At the same time, middle school and high school are places where fitting in, not sticking out, is preferred by most. There is the additional pressure for GLBTQ teens to balance their growing awareness of who they are as a sexual being. Will they come out or stay in the closet? How can they establish an individual identity where social groups can mean popularity and acceptance, often conforming to a personality that doesn't really reflect who they are? How can they be perceived as "normal?"

In fact, how can we as adults do that, and should we? If we behave like others we have a sense of acceptance about ourselves. At the same time we want to be recognized for the unique person we are. A great deal of my work is helping others to find what is special about them, to find their "gift." While in the spiritual sense we are one with everything around us, we are also an individualization of a creative mind behind all life.

We risk labels of being weird, crazy or eccentric if we step outside acceptable social rules, color outside the lines or dance to the beat of our own drum. "Why don't you dress your age?" is a question asked of some seniors. I don't even know what that means. Who are we to tell someone else how to express themselves? It's been my experience that a person who asks that of another is doing so for one of two reasons. They might be concerned for a friend or relative being looked down on (though the person in question probably doesn't care). Or, they may just be jealous that someone else has the chutzpah to live without allowing people to dictate how they should live their lives.

I saw a woman in Giant last year that was probably well on the other side of sixty. Her hair was flawless, the blouse sensual but not tacky and the simple black skirt that fit her like a glove was well above her knees. The ensemble was completed by a pair of fierce, black pumps with five-inch spike heels. She was elegant, proud and confident. I complimented her on the fact that she took such meticulous care in her appearance. She blushed and was truly moved that anyone would take the time to tell her. I also congratulated her (as a gay man who has worn his share of heels) on being one of the few women I'd seen recently who could walk confidently in a pair of stilettos without looking like a gazelle with splints on its legs. She nodded knowingly. I realized I'd found a kindred spirit.

making sense of life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

Is she our "normal" picture of a woman of that age? Probably more so in 2014 than when I was growing up in the '60's, but I'm sure she turned a few heads in the store that included disapproving smirks. I loved her. She wasn't out to prove she was 20. She wasn't trying to recapture a sensuality usually reserved in society's opinion for a woman twenty years younger. She was being who she was, without exception, explanation or apology and looked darned good doing it. When we are confident in our own personalities we don't do what we do to prove anything to anyone. We are being authentic and unique. In doing so, we reduce our stress level and provide the planet with a gift only we can give.

As one of my dearest friends once told me, "I don't defend, justify or explain my actions. I let the results speak for themselves." How are the results in your own life? Are you seeking approval instead of being the magnificent, unique individual you are? I invite you to step back the next time you begin thinking about stopping yourself from doing something out of fear of reprisal or the disapproval of others. Normal is average. Do you want to be "average," just "good enough?" I don't. I want to be amazing, authentic and magnificent! Be yourself. After all, you're the only person than can be "you!"

Terry Drew Karanen is an author, keynote speaker, licensed social worker and an ordained minister. He can be reached at: terry@terrydrewkaranen.com

Sadness and depression: *what's the difference?*

Everyone experiences sadness at some time in life. The loss of a loved one, a job, or a dream can all be distressing and unsettling, causing grief. At these times, people often describe themselves as depressed. Clinical depression is a different matter and is characterized by several factors, including two weeks of at least five of the following:

Depressed mood (feeling sad, empty, or hopeless)
Decreased enjoyment in life
Significant weight loss or weight gain
Sleep problems—too much or too little
Fatigue or loss of energy
Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
Difficulty concentrating
Thoughts of death or suicide

Others experience depression as less severe but lasting for a long time. About 20% of people in the United States experience depression at some time in life.

Grief is characterized by a sense of loss or emptiness and can have many of the same symptoms as depression, but the feelings and symptoms decrease over time. It is often triggered by thoughts or reminders of the loss. Grief can become depression if symptoms do not abate with time.

What can be done about depression?

There are many good treatments of depression, including medication, talking therapy, and new advances such as transcranial magnetic stimulation. A doctor, usually a family practitioner or psychiatrist, can evaluate symptoms of depression and recommend specific treatment based on the particular symptoms present. Typically, medication treatment lasts nine months or longer. Most depression can be successfully treated.

Be well!

mind matters

By Dr. Susan Thornsley

Mind Matters is an occasional column regarding mental health issues. Dr. Susan Thornsley is affiliated with Alder Health Services, 100 N. Cameron St., Suite 301, Harrisburg, 717-233-7190. Comments or requests to explore a particular topic can be addressed to posops@aol.com.

Hear Me Out

By Chris Azzopardi

• Miranda Lambert, *Platinum* Grade: A-

While Miranda Lambert's restless peers stray from the purity of the country genre to achieve mainstream acclaim, the Nashville Star alum has been widely popularized by sticking to her guns. She's known for slipping one in her back pocket should she need to pop an abusive lover ("Gunpowder & Lead," from 2007's Crazy Ex-Girlfriend), but what's more, Lambert's not leaving the house that built her. At least any time soon, as demonstrated by yet another feather in her cowgirl hat with the irresistibly witty, hit-heavy Platinum. Writing with Music City mainstays like Shane McAnally and Brandy Clark, both openly gay, Dolly Parton's buoyant campiness comes to mind as Lambert drops some wickedly good wisecracks (the title track delivers this winner: "What doesn't kill makes you blonder"). "Two Rings Shy" is also reminiscent of Parton, who you'd imagine living for a line like, "I ain't wastin' good mascara, just to watch it running down." "Gravity's a Bitch" bemoans aging with biting humor, "Babies Makin' Babies" lives up to its name, and "Little Red Wagon" rocks a "backyard swagger." It's always been Lambert's gun-toting badassery that makes her unexpectedly sentimental heart – from which she sings during the sweet love ballad "Holding on to You" – all the more powerful.

•

• Coldplay, *Ghost Stories* Grade: C

What do you do when the stars you used to sing about burn out? When the yellow turns to black? When the fixer needs some fixing? If you're Coldplay, you tell Ghost Stories. And you tell those tales like you have for the last two decades: with the dysphoria of a lost puppy. Inspired by frontman Chris Martin's "conscious uncoupling" from Gwyneth Paltrow, and following the lighthearted arena venture that made Mylo Xyloto a forced flounder, the band takes a less commercial approach with this nine-song eulogy. It's quieter, more ethereal, there's no Rihanna, but in backtracking to their pre-pop genesis, they forgot the reason the world fell in love with them in the first place: emotional resonance. With few exceptions, their sonic interpretations of desolation and heartache – though pretty and wistful, like soaring angels – disappear into the same cosmos they inhabit. The piano-led "O" is a dreamy coda as faceless as an actual dream, and "Midnight" works the Bon Iver-cum-vocoder effect – it's surprisingly not bad. Almost lovely enough to forget how many times you've heard something like it, the Avicii-produced, synth-charged A Sky Full of Stars is an extension of Mylo. That it's the only song you're likely to remember says a lot about the forgettable Ghost Stories, a Coldplay album so pale you'll have no choice but to consciously uncouple from it.

ALSO OUT:

• Robyn and Röyksopp, *Do It Again*

She's doing it again – making you get all dance-y. With punched-up synths and a chorus that just about combusts, "Do It Again" owns the floor much like you will every time you hear Robyn sing it. But that single isn't exactly indicative of the rest of her complex EP collaboration with Röyksopp, which begins and ends on less frenzied, more introspective notes. Its 10-minute fade-out calls back to the melancholy sprawl of "Monument," during which Robyn gets reflective: "When the moment comes, I can say I did it all with love." She can because it's true.

• Sharon Van Etten, *Are We There*

Affecting without any of that sentimental preciousness – one line reads: "I washed your dishes, but I shitted in your bathroom" – there's a transparency to Sharon Van Etten's latest that daringly exposes the visceral emotions of the end of a relationship. A stunningly sad truth-telling about two hearts that have grown apart, "I Love You But I'm Lost" cuts deep. "I Know," too, is simple poignancy told potently. This fourth album from Van Etten is a work of soul-baring genius.

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com.

Hobby Lobby *continued from page one*

test to this fact circumstance."

Marci A. Hamilton, law professor, Cordoza Law School, told *Central Voice* (May-June 2014), the decision could have implications for LGBT civil rights within the workplace.

Hamilton said the case is inextricably linked to LGBT rights because of what could become the slippery slope in varying interpretations of the Supreme Court's decision and its language that could lead to discrimination.

The fear of discrimination based on religious beliefs is not farfetched.

For example, Pennsylvania does not have a non-discrimination law protecting employees on the basis of sexual identity or gender identification. Could the court's decision be applied to a privately-held company owner's belief that being gay is sinful and therefore incompatible with his or her religious beliefs? Could that lead to an employee's dismissal?

What if a company offered family health care coverage but defined marriage as between one man and one woman. Could same-sex couples be denied that coverage because they do not fit the definition?

April 3 Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant signed a bill that supporters say will assure unfettered practice of religion without government interference but that opponents worry could lead to state-sanctioned discrimination against gays and lesbians. The bill, called the Mississippi Religious Freedom Restoration Act, became law July 1. It also adds "In God We Trust" to the state seal.

An early version of the Mississippi bill was similar to one Arizona's Republican governor, Jan Brewer, vetoed after business groups said it could hurt that state's economy.

Supporters say the final Mississippi bill bears little resemblance to the failed Arizona measure. And while there is no specific mention of LGBT individuals in the Mississippi measure, the legislation would certainly discriminate against LGBT people seeking any number of services in the state because these services—from dining at a restaurant or being treated at a hospital—could be refused or denied based solely upon one's personal religious convictions. As noted, the Supreme Court's Conestoga decision is the first time that the court has ruled that profit-seeking businesses can hold religious views under federal law.

Conestoga Wood and Hobby Lobby have prevailed. If, as plaintiffs, they have religious or moral objections to providing certain forms of contraception, surely it stands to reason that other types of privately-owned, for-profit businesses would be able to find convenient ways to discriminate against all kinds of people—LGBT, minorities, women—based on the claim of religious freedom.

Equality PA executive director Ted Martin said," We hope that moving forward, Congress will act to clarify that business owners may not impose their religious beliefs on their employees or customers, just as the court expressly confirmed with its ruling that owners must comply with nondiscrimination laws regardless of their beliefs."

Chamber on the move

By Bill Krenz

Central Pennsylvania
Gay and Lesbian
Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Mixers

In addition to being presented our third consecutive national award from the National Gay& Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (see article on page x), the Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce will host members and their guests at upcoming network evenings.

Future events:

Sept. 17 - Look forward to a fabulous time at ser David's & Company at 304 Market Street in Lemoyne on Sept. 17. This full service hair salon opened earlier this year to rave reviews.

Oct. 15 - Holtgate Podiatry and Ernest Fontaine DDS Dentistry will jointly host the mixer at Juice & Grind, 271 Market St, Lemoyne.

Nov. 18 - The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC) will host Nov. 18 at Alder Health Services, 100 N Cameron St, Harrisburg

Past events:

July 9 - Hetrick, Bitner, Geigle and Smith Funeral Homes hosted a mixer at Geigle Funeral Home, Harrisburg.

July 26 - the chamber was represented at Central PA Pride Festival.

Aug. 3 - the chamber was present at Yorkj City's first Equality Festival

Aug. 13 - Members 1st Federal Credit Union welcomed chamber members back to their Hempstead Road branch in Lancaster.

www.cpglcc.org

Did you know who won the Cher tickets? See page 31

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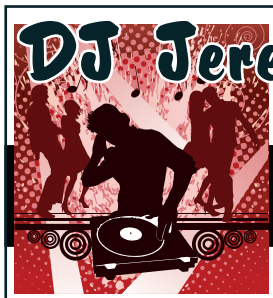
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